Engraved for
MOZLEY and CO's
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SELECT FABLES
OF
ÆSOP
AND OTHER FABULISTS
IN THREE BOOKS
By R. DODSLEY.

——— Is not the earth
With various living creatures, and the air
Replenished, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee: Knowest thou not
Their language and their ways? They also know
And reason not contemptibly: with these
Find pastime. Paradise Lost b. 8 l. 370.

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THE

PREFACE.

THE Fables of Esop have always been esteemed the best lessons for youth, as being well adapted to convey the most useful maxims, in a very agreeable manner. Accordingly, many writers, both in verse and prose, have endeavoured to clothe them in an English dress. It would ill become the Author of this work to animadvert upon their labours: but he thinks it may be said with truth, and he hopes with modesty, that nothing of this kind, which has been published in prose, can justly discourage him from the present undertaking.

In forming this collection, he has endeavoured to distinguish, by two separate Books, the respective compositions of the earlier and later mythologists; and he trusts it will not be found that he has often been mistaken in this distribution, though an error of that kind might perhaps appear of no great importance. His principal aim was to select such Fables as would make the strongest and most useful impressions on the minds of youth; and then to offer them in such unaffected language, as might have some tendency to improve their style. If in this he should be allowed to have at all succeeded, the work, it is presumed,

will not be unserviceable to young readers, nor wholly unentertaining to persons of maturer judgment.

To these he has ventured to add a third Book, consisting entirely of original Fables; and he offers it to the Public with all the diffidence which ought to accompany modern productions, when they appear in conjunction with writings of established reputation. Indeed, whatever hopes he has, that the present work may be favourably received, arise chiefly from the consideration, that he has been assisted in it by gentlemen of the most distinguished abilities; and that several, both of the old and the new Fables, are not written by himself, but by authors with whom it is an honour to be connected; and who having condescended to favour him with their assistance, have given him an opportunity of making some atonement for his own defects.

The life of Esop prefixed to the former editions of these Fables, having been thought not so full and satisfactory as it might have been, a learned and ingenious friend has been so kind as to consult the ancient writers who have made any mention of Esop. He hopes he has added many facts and anecdotes of his life, not hitherto taken notice of; and that he has set his character in a clearer and better light than it has hitherto appeared.

A NEW

LIFE OF ESOP.

IN recording the lives of such persons as have made themselves remarkable only by their writings, and who flourished at a very wide distance from our own times; the great difficulty, in general, is to collect sufficient memorials: but in giving an account of Esop, there arises a particular difficulty, from the many falsehoods which have been so long and so confidently asserted concerning him. I shall therefore first endeavour to clear the ground from these; and then to collect from writers of good credit what may be related of him with more probability.

The great distorter both of Esop's life and person, is one Planudes; an eastern monk, who lived at Constantinople (*a*) toward the end of the 14th century. He published several Fables in Greek, under the name of Esop, and prefixed a life of him to his edition of them; in which he is supposed (*b*) by very good judges, to have confounded the oriental fabulist, Lokman, with Esop; and to have attributed what may have been true of the former, to the latter. Lokman (*c*) is described as deformed; of a black complexion

(*a*) Fabricius says he flourished in the year 1380. Bibl. Græca. Lib. 3. cap. 28. p. 693.

(*b*) Sale's Koran, p. 335. (*c*) Ibid.

with thick lips, and splay feet: Planudes has since formed his picture of Esop; and the artists have been too ready to follow his description of him (*d*) almost ever since. Planudes, as usual, does this without any authority from the Greek and Roman writers, who preceded him; and takes the same liberty, in making Esop travel into Assyria and Egypt. He has not only abused his person, but represents him more like an idle buffoon, than a man of deep morality, and great wisdom, which seems to have been his true character. Planudes is also (*e*) supposed to have written many of the Fables himself, which he gave to the world as Esop's: and, indeed, his fictions very often betray their author, who was a mean writer as well as a false one. In the Fables he makes Esop quote (*f*) Euripides, who was not born till almost 80 years after his death; and speaks of the (*g*) Piræus as the port of Athens, which did not exist till above 80 years later. Demades the rhetorician, is the subject of one of them; who was a rival of Demosthenes, and consequently lived above 150 years

(*d*) Alsop, although a writer on the side of Mr. Boyle, in the famous dispute with Dr. Bentley, prefixed a picture of Esop to his Fables, in which he is represented as a handsome person.

(*e*) By Vavassor; de ludicra dictione, p. 21. and Henry Stevens; who in his Thesaurus Linguæ Græcæ has never quoted his Fables. Bayle, Art. Æs. Note K.

(*f*) Bayle, Art. Æs. Note B. (*g*) Ibid. Note K. 42.

after Esop: and in the moral of another, he goes so far as to mention (*h*) the order of monks, which did not subsist till near a thousand years after him In the same manner, in the life of Esop, he makes him go to the court of Nectanebus in Egypt, whereas Nectanebus did not reign there till 200 years afterwards: he carries him likewise to that of king Lycerus at Babylon, who never reigned there at all; and indeed is only a king of his own creation.

From all those fictions, mistakes, and absurdities, when considered together, it must sufficiently appear, that Planudes ought to be rejected, as an evidence of no credit at all; and I shall therefore, in the following account, lay him entirely aside: together with Philostratus's tale of Mercury's visit to Esop, in the early part of his life, and those other legendary stories of his being engaged (*i*) in two battles, and writing two books, after he was dead.

To leave these wild and visionary writers for something more certain, it appears from authors of very good credit, that Esop flourished in the (*k*) time of the seven famous Sages of Greece: and notwithstanding almost

(*h*) He alſo makes him uſe words and ſentiments in the ſcripture ſtyle rather than the heathen. Bayle, Note K. 43.

(*i*) Meziriac's life of Eſop, chap. 8.—Both mentioned by Bayle; Art. Æſ. Notes C. and N.

(*k*) Laertius, in Chilo.

as many (*l*) countries might lay in their claim for him, as there were cities which contended for being the birth-place of Homer, he was most probably a native of Phrygia. Many authors affirm it, in general; and one in particular, says, that he was born in (*m*) Cotiæum a city of that province in the Lesser Asia.

Esop was probably of low parentage; for the whole that we hear of him in his youth is, that he was a (*n*) shepherd's boy, and afterwards a slave. His first master, in that capacity, was (*o*) Caresias, of Athens. In that city he had a fair opportunity of learning the Grecian language in its perfection: and there also he might be led to the thought of writing Fables, from the mode of instruction then in fashion, which was by conveying

(*l*) Maximus Tyrius names Sardis in Lydia, for the birth-place of Esop. Diss. 20. And Phrygia. Diss. 33.—Julian, the island of Samos. Orat. 7. p. 207.—Suidas, the island of Samos, &c.——The scholiast of Aristophanes, and Heraclides (in Gronov. Thes. Gr. Tom. 6. p. 2897.) Mesembria, a city in Thrace.—And besides several of the persons before mentioned, Lucian, Phædrus, Aulus Gellius, and Stobæus, speak of him as a Phrygian. So that the weight of authority is much the most prevalent for his being born in Phrygia; and if the account of the proverb (mentioned p. x.) be true, that alone would make all other authorities quite unnecessary.

(*m*) Suidas.

(*n*) Philostratus; in the life of Appolonius, Lib. 56. 5.

(*o*) Meziriac, ch. 2. from Aphthonius. Bayle calls him Carasius, as from Meziriac.

it in moral sentences, or proverbs: and a Fable (in Esop's manner) is nothing else but a story invented for that purpose. It is also said (and I think with very good reason) that Esop chose this method (*p*) because his station as a slave would otherwise have weakened his authority; which defect he was willing to supply by the strength and beauty of his allegories.

His next master after Caresias was (*q*) Xanthus; and his third, Idmon, (*r*) sirnamed the Wise, of the island of Samos. It was with the last, that he had the famous Rhodopis for his fellow slave, according to Herodotus and Plutarch; and according to Pliny (*s*) she

(*p*) Meziriac, ch. 3.—probably from Phædrus Introd. to Lib. 3, ver. 33, to 38.

(*q*) Suidas.

(*r*) So Plutarch calls him; de ferâ numinis vindictâ, p. 556, 557.—Herodotus calls him Jadmon, B. 2. c. 134.

(*s*) Minimam ex his, (the pyramids of Egypt,) ſed laudatiſſimam, a Rhodope meritricula factam, Æſopi, fabularum philoſophi, conſerva quondam, & contubernalis hæc fuit. Plin. L. 36. c. 12.

Contubernalis ſignified of old the (wife, or) mate, of a ſlave—Qualicunque villico contubernalis mulier aſſignanda eſt; quæ contineat eum, & in quibuſdam rebus adjuvet. Columella, de Re Ruſt. L. 1. c. 8.——Contubernalis mulier proprié dicitur ſervi; nam uxoris nomen in liberâ tantum ponitur. Scævola, de fidei Com. Lib. Leg. Thais 45. S. 15.—Contubernium proprié ſervile connubium. Paul. Lib. Sent. 2. c. 10.

There is ſome reaſon to imagine they were a remarkably handſome couple: for as ſhe is ſaid to have had her name from the beauty of her complexion, he ſeems to me to have had his from the particular ſparkling of his eyes.

was his wife, or mate, during his servitude there. It was the same Rhodopis, who afterwards became so celebrated, and so extremely (*t*) rich. Idmon was so much pleased with the behaviour and wisdom of Esop, that after having been some time in his service, he gave him (*u*) his liberty.

Esop, after having obtained his freedom gradually acquired so great a reputation, that at length he was considered as equal to the most celebrated (*w*) of the seven Sages of Greece, his contemporaries: so that what Horace said of Stertinius, perhaps in his humorous way, (*x*) "That he was the eighth of the wise men, might be said of Esop very seriously; nay, there are some who very much prefer his manner of instruction to that of the philosophers just mentioned, (*y*) and give good reasons for their opinion. He

(*t*) She made a noble preſent to the temple at Delphi, from the tenth of her ſubſtance, according to Herodotus; and Pliny ſays ſhe built one of the famous pyramids of Egypt. Nat. Hiſt. Lib. 36. c. 12. Herodotus ſays, the pyramid aſcribed to her was built long before her time; and that though ſhe was very rich, ſhe could not have been able to ſuſtain the immenſe charge of that building. B 2. ch. 134 and 135.

(*u*) Meziriac, ch. 4. from the Scholiaſt on Ariſtophane's Aves, Herodotus, and Plutarch.

(*w*) Meziriac, chap. 5.

(*x*) Hor. Lib. 2. ſat. 3. 296.

(*y*) Æſopus ille, e Phrygia fabulator, haud immerito ſapiens exiſtimatus eſt: quum quæ utilia monitu ſuaſuque erant non ſeveré, non imperioſé, præcepit & ſenſuit, ut Phi-

was well acquainted with those great men, particulary with Solon and Chilo. He was received with them in the court (*z*) of Periander, King of Corinth, who himself was one of the number; and in that of Crœsus, King of Lydia, in his capital of Sardis. He was much beloved (*a*) by that prince; and it was in his court that Esop shewed he had more wisdom, or at least more political wisdom, than all of them, on the following occasion: Crœsus (*b*) after having shewn these Sages the magnificence of his court, and the vastness of his riches, asked them, "Whom they thought the happiest man?" Some of them named one, and some another: Solon (whom I think without injury we may look upon as superior to all the rest) in his answer gave two instances. The first was that of one Tellus, a poor Athenian, but of great virtue; who had eminently distinguished himself by his care and education of his family, and at lost his life in fighting for his country: the other was of two brothers, who had given a very remarkable proof of their

losophis mos est; sed festivos delectabilesque apologos commentus, res salubriter ac prospicienter animadversas, in mentes animosque hominum cum audiendi quâdam illecebrâ induxit. Aulus Gellius, Noctes Art. L. 2. c. 29.

(*z*) Sent thither by Crœsus; Plutarch's Convivium Sapient.

(*a*) Suidas. Art. Æsopas.

(*b*) Meziriac, ch. 5.—Plutarch in the life of Solon.

filial piety, and were in reward for it taken out of this life by the gods, the very night after they had performed so dutiful an action: and concluded with adding, that he had given such instances, because no one could be pronounced happy before his death. Esop, who was one of the company, and perceived that the king was not well satisfied with any of their answers, being asked the same question, replied, "That for his part he was persuaded that Crœsus had as much pre-eminence in happiness over all other men, as the sea has over all rivers." The King was so much pleased with his compliment, that he eagerly pronounced that sentence, which afterwards became a common proverb, "The Phrygian has hit the mark!" Soon after this happened, Solon took his leave of Crœsus; and was dismissed very coolly. Esop, on his departure, accompanied him part of his journey; and as they were on the road, took an opportunity of saying to him, "O Solon, either we must not speak to Kings, or we must say what will please them." "On the contrary," replied Solon, "we should either not speak to kings at all, or we should give them good and useful advice."(c) So great was the steadiness of the chief of the Sages, and such the courtliness of Esop.

(c) Plutarch's Life of Solon.

Meziriac, in his Life of Esop (*d*) seems, like a true Frenchman, to be pleased with him for this instance of his complaisance. He says, that "his residing in the court of so mighty a King as Crœsus, rendered him more polite than most of the other Philosophers of his time; more compliant with the humour of princes; and more reconciled to monarchical government." Esop gave another instance of the latter, in a visit which he made to Athens; soon (*e*) after Pisistratus, by his artifices practised on the people, had attained the highest point of his ambition, and made himself master of his country. The people repented of what they had done, and began to murmur: Esop, on this occasion, instead of inventing a Fable to show Pisistratus how glorious it would be for him to restore liberty to the Athenians, composed one to persuade that people to submit quietly to the power which he had usurped over them. It is one of the first of those which Phædrus has translated from Esop. In his introduction to it, Phædrus (*f*) intimates that Pisistratus was a good prince; and it is very true, that in his administration (*g*) he was not a bad one; but had not Esop been so well reconciled to monarchical government, as Meziriac thinks, and as Plutarch (*h*) proves, he was;

(*d*) Chap. 5. (*e*) Phædrus, Lib. 1. Fab. 2, 6. (*f*) ib.
(*g*) Plutarch, in his Life of Solon.
(*h*) In the little dispute between him and Solon at the banquet of the Sages, p. 151, C. &c.

he would naturally have taken the part of the enslaved people, rather than that of their enslaver.

Esop, however, in all instances where courts and the masters of them were not concerned, seems to have gone as far in the pursuit of wisdom as any of the Sages. When (*i*) Chilo, one of the seven, asked him, while yet but a young man, "What God was doing?" Esop immediately answered, "That he was depressing the proud, and exalting the humble:" an answer, which Mr. Bayle calls (*k*) wonderful; and descants very largely upon it. Remarkable too was his idea of the miseries of mankind, as appears from an observation he frequently made, (*l*) "That Prometheus, having taken earth to form mankind, tempered and moistened it, not with water, but with tears." From this little specimen of his sentiments and reflections (*m*) one cannot but regret our not having a greater number of them preserved to us.

(*i*) Laertius. Art. Chilo.

(*k*) Bayle, Art. Æs. Note I.

(*l*) Mez. ch. 6. From Themistius: Orat. 32.

(*m*) His idea in relation to proper relaxations of the mind is expressed in the strongest oriental way by Phædrus, in the fourteenth Fable of his third Book; and he makes him speak with a great air of authority on other occasions; where he represents him as wiser than all the people of Athens taken together.

O si maneret condito sensus patri
Quam graviter ferret, quod voluntatem suam
Interpretari non potuissent Attici!

Lib. 4. Fab. 4.

Æsop dedicated his services, in the latter part of his life, to Crœsus; and after some other embassies or employs, was sent by that monarch (*n*) to the city of Delphi, with a large sum of money, in order to offer magnificent sacrifices to Apollo, and to distribute (*o*) four mînæ of silver to each citizen. During his residence among them, he conceived so great a dislike to the manners and morals of the Delphians, and spoke of their misconduct with so much freedom, that he extremely provoked them. Among other things, he reproached them with having scarcely any arable land; and observed, "That were it not for the great concourse of strangers, and the vast offerings made in their temple, they would soon be reduced to the extremity of hunger." Not satisfied with offending them in words, he proceeded to deeds; for having performed the sacrifices in the manner that Crœsus had ordered, he sent back the rest of the money to the city of Sardis, as judging the Delphians not worthy to partake of the King's liberality. This irritated them against him to such a degree, that they consulted how they might be revenged; and accordingly entered into a conspiracy to take away his

(*n*) Scholiaſt on Ariſtophanes's Waſps, ver. 1437, and Plutarch on the Certainty of the Divine Vengeance, though deferred, tom ii. p. 557.

(*o*) Twelve pounds a man; the ſilver mina being twelve ounces, or three pounds of our money; according to Ainſworth.

life by a notorious piece of villany. They hid among his baggage one of (*p*) the golden vessels consecrated to Apollo; and soon after Esop was set out on his return, they dispatched messengers after him, who overtook him in his way to Phocis, charged him with the theft; and on searching, produced the vessel which they themselves had procured to be secretly conveyed into his baggage. Upon this pretence they immediately drag him to Delphi, throw him into prison, accuse him of sacrilege, and sentence him to be precipitated from the rock Hyampia; which was their usual punishment for sacrilegious persons. As they were on the point of throwing him down the rock, he obtained leave to speak in his defence; and delivered, in his usual manner, a Fable. It was that of the Eagle (*q*) and the Beetle; the purport of which was to show, "That the weakest may sometimes procure vengeance against the most powerful, when greatly injured by them:" but the enraged Delphians paid no regard either to his Fable, or its Moral. They only increased their clamours against him; and without any mercy hurried him

(*p*) Ariſtoph. and Theraclides, in Gronoy. Theſ. Gr. tom. 6. p. 2830.

(*q*) Mentioned by the Scholiaſt on Ariſtoph. In Pace V. 177, and Veſp. 1437. That Scholiaſt gives us the Fable itſelf, in a manner a good deal different from the modern way of telling the ſtory; but I ſhould imagine not in ſo good an one. Eſop probably told it himſelf.

down the precipice. However, Heaven, (as the old writers observe) did inflict that vengeance on the Delphians which he had thus, in a sort of prophetic spirit, foretold. Their land was rendered barren; and they were afflicted with many strange distempers, for several years afterwards. In this distress they consulted the oracle; and were answered, that all their miseries were owing to the unjust condemnation and death of Esop. In consequence of this answer, they caused a proclamation to be made by sound of trumpet, at some of the most public feasts and general meetings of the Greeks; that "whoever bore any relation to Esop, and would demand satisfaction for his death, was desired to come and exact it from the Delphians, in what manner he pleased." There was none who pretended to any right in this affair, till the third generation: when a Samian appeared, named Idmon; (*r*) a grandson of that Idmon who had been master of Esop, in the island of Samos: and the Delphians having made him the satisfaction he desired, were delivered from their calamities.

According to Eusebius, the death of Esop happened in the (*s*) fourth year of the fifty-

(*r*) Herodotus; and Plutarch, de ſerâ numinis vindictâ.
(*s*) Bayle. Art. Æſ. Note C. Meziriac ſays, the firſt of the fifty-fourth Olympiad, chap. vi.

fourth Olympiad ; which was 561 years before the Christian Æra.

If we were to follow probability rather than the assertions of some writers in the lower ages, I should be more apt to think that Esop was of a handsome countenance and shape, than ugly and deformed ; notwithstanding the general prepossession to the contrary, which has prevailed for the three or four last centuries. There is no author quoted as saying any thing to the disadvantage of Esop's person, till after the fall of all the arts and sciences ; and almost a thousand years after his death. The first writer quoted in support of this groundless opinion is Stobæus (*t*) who has it from I don't know whom ; and what is said by this unknown person, relates only to the air of Esop's (*u*) countenance ; for there is not a word intimated of his resembling an Ethiop, or of his being deformed in any part of his body. Planudes was the first who propagated any fancies of the latter kind ; and that probably from his taking (*w*) another person for Esop ; and not

(*t*) Esop died 561 years before our Æra, and Stobæus (according to Blair's Tables) lived in the beginning of the fifth century after Christ.

(*u*) He says, that Esop being reproached for having a sour countenance, answered, " Regard not my looks, but my mind." This anonymous authority from Stobæus, I should think might be much over-balanced by that of Philostratus, who lived long before Stobæus ; and in his picture of Esop gives him a pleasing countenance, even while he is meditating.

(*w*) See p. i.

till (*x*) about two thousand years after the death of this celebrated mythologist. There is no occasion to oppose this notion of Planudes by searching for any express authorities against him; it having been so fully proved before (*y*) that he has totally destroyed all his own credit himself.

Philostratus in his (*z*) account of several pictures in the time (*a*) of the Antonines, gives us one, in which Esop is the principal figure. The painter represents him before his own house; there the Geniuses (*b*) of the several sorts of Esopian Fables approach him with pleasure and regard, as the chief inventor and writer of Fables. As such they adorn him with wreaths of flowers, and crown him with olive-branches. He has a pleasing smile upon his countenance; and at the same time his eyes are fixt upon the ground, as

(*x*) He flouriſhed 1941 years after the death of Eſop. See note (*a*) p. i.

(*y*) See p. iv. and v. (*z*) In Icon. Art.

(*a*) From the year 138 to 179 of our Æra.

(*b*) There were probably three of theſe Geniuſes in the picture; the Eſopian Fables being divided into three ſorts. "The rational, in which Men only are introduced; the characterèd, were only Beaſts, under characters aſſigned to them; and the mixt, in which both Men and Beaſts are concerned." From Aphthonius, in Præexercitam: one of the Teſtimon. in Nevelet's edition.

The Genius of each ſort of the leſſer Fables is made to attend Eſop here, as perſons; in the ſame manner that the Genius of the greater, or Epic Fable attends Homer, in the famous relievo of his Apotheſis.

being then composing a Fable; and composing it (*c*) with that humour and gaiety for which he was so remarkable. There are several men, and several beasts intermixt, that form a sort of circle round him; and among the latter, the Fox is particularly distinguished; Esop making as much use of him in his Fables, as the dramatic writers do of Davus in their Comedies. There is a great deal of sense (says Philostratus) exprest in the picture in general; and particularly, in the looks and attitudes of the three Geniuses, that are paying their regards to him.

In this picture the countenance of Esop is very well represented, as partly pleasant and partly grave; but Plutarch has given us a much fuller and stronger picture of his thoughts and manner of conversation. 'Tis in his Feast of the Sages, at the court of Periander, King of Corinth, who himself was one (*d*) of the seven. As this is perhaps one of the most valuable remains of antiquity that is left to us, and as Esop has a considerable share in it, I shall take the liberty of inserting it very much at large; though it will bear no proper proportion to the rest of his life: but I think it cannot be unaccept-

(*c*) This seems to be the intent of the painter, though Philostratus gives another turn to it.

(*d*) The other six are Thales, Solon, Cleobulus, Chilo, Bias, and Pittacus: to whom, says Laertius, some add Anacharsis the Scythian, Muso the Kenean, Perecydes the Syrian, Epimenides of Crete, and Pisistratus the tyrant of Athens. In proem. § 13.

able to the reader; and heartily wish, that the whole was translated into English by some abler hand.

Periander, while the rest of the wise men were all in his court, invites them, and several (*e*) others, to a feast in one of his pleasure-houses, near the city of Corinth, where he was to make a (*f*) particular sacrifice to Venus. It was at the foot of Licæum, or eastern promontory of the Corinthian Isthmus; a place naturally very delightful (*g*) and much assisted by art: for Periander was a (*h*) lover of magnificence; which, together with his being a tyrant, may possibly account for Lucian's (*i*) excluding him from his Ely-

(*e*) Beſides Periander, and the ſix Sages (firſt mentioned in the note before) there were Eſop, and Anacharſis the Scythian; Meliſſa, the wife of Periander; Eumetis her attendant, daughter of Cleobulus, one of the Sages, and herſelf ſometimes called Cleoboline, or the Little Female Sage: Naucratites (alſo called Niloxenus) ſent to conſult Bias, and his brethren, by Amaſis King of Egypt; Mneſiphilus, from Athens; Diocles, a prieſt and augur, in Periander's ſervice; Ardalus, prieſt of the temple of the Muſes, founded by one of his anceſtors; Cherſias, a poet; and Cleodemus, a phyſician.

(*f*) Periander had left off paying any devotions to Venus, ever ſince his mother had put an end to her life for love; and this was his firſt return to them, upon ſome dreams of his wife Meliſſa. Xylander's Plutarch, fol. vol. 2. p. 146, D.

(*g*) Pauſanias, in Corinthiacis.

(*h*) Plutarch, p. 148, B.

(*i*) Lucian ſays, he ſaw Anacharſis, Zamolxes, Numa, Lycurgus, Phocion, and Tellus, in Elyſium; "and all the

sium. Periander ordered a chariot for each of the invited guests, to convey them to the place. When that which was provided for Thales arrives, he smiles; is very much obliged, but chooses to walk through the fields. He does so; and two (*k*) other of the guests accompany him. In their walk, they meet with Alexidemus, natural son of the tyrant of Miletus, returning from the villa, in a very great heat. A place it seems, at the lowest table, had been assigned for him, and he could not bear to sit beneath "Æolians and Islanders, and (*l*) people that nobody knows." They pass him, and laugh at his folly. When they come to the dining-room, Thales asks aloud, "Which was the place his countryman had refused?" and when it was showed to him, sits down in it. Esop opens the conversation; and in order to ridicule the behaviour of Alexidemus, begins with telling a Fable of the arrogant Mule mortified. After the tables were cleared, and garlands distributed to each of the guests by Melissa, the wife of Periander, Anacharsis says something, a little severely, on the Grecian fashion of using musical instruments in their worship of the Gods: and as

ſeven Sages, except Periander." Tom 1. p. 674, Ed. Blaeu.

(*k*) Diocles, the prieſt and augur; and Naucratites, the ambaſſador from Amaſis, King of Egypt.

(*l*) Plutarch, p. 148, F.

this might have produced too serious a debate, Esop turns it off (*m*) with a jest.

One of this venerable company was Naucratites, sent by Amasis, King of Egypt, to consult Bias; and the other wise men on a letter he had received from the King of Ethiopia. It was a custom amongst the learned in those days, to send (*n*) wise sentences, and puzzling questions, to one another; and this intercouse was carried on even between persons of different nations. This letter was of the latter kind; and required Amasis to drink up the sea. It is read, and (*o*) the difficulty evaded by Bias. Cleodemus, the physician, speaks very justly against these difficult and puzzling questions; but is as unkind in

(*m*) Plutarch, p. 150, E.

(*n*) The taſte of the knowing, in Eſop's time, was to ſtudy rules for the conduct of life; and to make wiſe ſentences, or proverbs, for the ſame purpoſe. At their tables, they often put queſtions of this ſort to be anſwered ſeverally, by as many as choſe to do it. They alſo ſent moral queſtions, from one kingdom to another; and ſometimes puzzling, or enigmatical queſtions to be reſolved. The letter ſent by Amaſis to Bias was one of the latter kind; and the queſtion propoſed after it, of the former: Plutarch, 151, C.

Theſe puzzling queſtions, though much inferior to the other ſort, were not a corruption of them in theſe times; but of the greateſt antiquity, as we find by the contention between Homer and Heſiod; Plutarch in Conviv. Sap. p. 154.) and the riddle, which Samſon puts to the Philiſtines, 1141 years before our Æra (Judges xiv. 14.)

(*o*) Plut. 151, C.

specifying, " That they were like Eumetis's riddles and fit only to be played with by women." Eumetis (who was present as an attendant on Melissa, and was a lady of the greatest sweetness, modesty, and wisdom) at first seemed inclined to answer him; but restrained herself, and blushed. Esop, with great good-nature, saved her from part of her confusion, by making a jest upon the physician and his practice; and by that means called off the eyes of the company from her to him.(*p*) Periander then desires each of them to contribute some wise sentence for the benefit of Amasis and the company. Solon, Bias, Thales, Anacharsis, Cleobulus, Pittacus, and Chilo, gave each of them a piece of advice for Kings; and Periander being prest to add his, said, " That the sentences which they had given, were almost sufficient to deter any man of sense from reigning." Esop, on this, speaks of the civility due to princes; digresses into a little dispute with Solon about the preference of monarchical to republican government; but for fear it should grow too serious, soon turns it off (in his usual way) with a piece of humour. Naucratites then resumes his business, and mentions (*q*) some other questions from Amasis, which are answered by Thales. As the messenger from Amasis had now dispatched all his orders,

(*p*) Plutarch, 152, D.
(*q*) Ibid. 153.

Mnesiphilus the Athenian proposes to the company, (*r*) that as they had before given their thoughts of what might be useful to Kings, they would not give them, as to what might be beneficial to commonwealths; (*s*) and the Sages speak each on this subject, in a sententious manner.

Then Diocles, the priest and augur of Periander, proposes (*t*) that they may say something on the government of a house and family; since each of the company present had a house to govern. "I deny that," says Esop, "for Anacharsis here has only a (*u*) cart." Anacharsis answers him in his usual grave and solid manner, and desires that his answer to him may at the same time pass as his (*w*) club toward what was proposed by Diocles. The rest of the Sages give their sentences, or sentiments, severally, on the same subject.

Here Melissa and Eumetis (*x*) withdraw; the company falls into a mixt conversation; and Esop, who had been blamed himself before for a digression from the subject then in hand, tells them a (*y*) Fable of the Wolf and Shepherds, to show that they themselves were now guilty of the same fault. Soon

(*r*) Plutarch, 154, C.
(*s*) Ibid. 154, D. and E. (*t*) Ibid. 155, A.
(*u*) Anacharsis was a Scythian; and that people had no fixed habitation: but lived in a sort of waggons, to shift their places of abode whenever they chose to do so.
(*w*) Plutarch, p. 155, B.
(*x*) Plutarch, 155, D. (*y*) Ibid. 156, A.

after this, (*z*) the subject of œconomics is resumed; and Cleobulus being asked, what is a competency? begins with mentioning an old vulgar story, about making a coat for the moon; and a Fable of Esop's, on a Dog's contracting himself in winter, and extending himself in summer: and this inquiry about a competency, leads them into (*a*) a fuller consideration of temperance and aliments.

In the close of this, Gorgias, the brother of Periander, comes in from a voyage; and gives an (*b*) account of the wonderful preservation of Arion, by the Dolphins, who carried him to shore, when flung into the sea. Esop (*c*) (whether in jest or seriously) does not seem to believe it: Diocles, in answer to him, refers to the preservation of Phryxus and Helle; and Solon says, "These things are above our reach, and must be left to the Gods." Several other stories (*d*) are told of persons assisted by Dolphins; and Anacharsis reasons, (as is his way) very gravely and finely, upon Providence. On their inquiry's growing too nice, and particular, and Esop's quoting several verses out of Homer, Solon takes hold of that opportunity to quote a verse of Homer too, to put them in mind of its drawing toward bed-time. He (*e*) then

(*z*) Plutarch, 157, A.
(*a*) Ibid. 157 to 160.
(*b*) Ibid. 160 to 162.
(*c*) Plutarch, 162, B.
(*d*) Ibid. p. 163.
(*e*) Ibid. p. 164.

proposes a sacrifice; which they perform and depart.

It appears upon the whole, from what is (*f*) recorded by Plutarch on this occasion, that Esop's conversation consisted of a mixture of humour, wit, mirth, and good-nature; and the adapting, or making of Fables upon the spot, as occasions arose: and immediately after the perusal of this piece, it first came into my thoughts, that Esop was perhaps a man as full of wit and humour as our celebrated Dr. Swift; for he scarce ever speaks without exercising one or other of those talents. He might possibly have been as (*g*) satirical too, though in a more gay and less disobliging manner: and, indeed, his good-nature is pointed out as strongly as any part of his character. (*h*) His wisdom itself was gay and cheerful; and it was for that very reason, that he has been so often preferred to all the seven Sages of Greece. He was free and open in his discourse: for he speaks frequently; and though there were so many in company (*i*)

(*f*) Plutarch, in the entrance on this subject, says, there had been false accounts published of it; and proposes his as a true one.

(*g*) Plut. p. 152.—Derisor potiùs, quàm deridendus Senex, Phæd. lib. 3. fab. 14.—For a remarkable instance of his humour, very like Dr. Swift, see the same, lib. 3. fab. 5.

(*h*) In his rescuing a lady of so charming a character as Eumetis from her confusion, p. 152, D.

(*i*) See note *e*, p. xix.

and so many of high rank and figure, he has (in a manner) the first and last word in their conversation. Plutarch too confirms what has been observed (*k*) by others; that he was very free in intermixing his fables, even in the most common and familiar parts of his discourse.

I have (*l*) already mentioned the reason why Esop might choose to write Fables: and though he certainly was not (*m*) the inventor, he excelled all others so greatly in that way of writing, that he has generally (*n*) been regarded as such; and is called so by several,

(*k*) In particular, by Priscian. See below, note *n*.

(*l*) P. vii.

(*m*) Priscian mentions Archilochus, as a writer of Fables, who flourished above a century before Esop. (Bayle, Note A.) Quintilian speaks of Hesiod as the first inventor of them, (id. ib.) who was two centuries earlier than Archilochus; and the Fable of Jotham recorded in Scripture (Judges, ch. ix, v. 8—20) is almost three centuries earlier than Hesiod.

(*n*) Illæ quoque fabulæ, quæ etiamsi originem non ab Æsopo acceperunt, (nam videtur earum primus auctor Hesiodus) nomine tamen Æsopi maximè celebrantur; ducere animos solent, præcipuè rusticorum & imperitorum: qui et simpliciùs, quæ ficta sunt, audiunt; & capti voluptate, facilè iis quibus delectantur consentiunt. Quintilian, Instit. Or. Lib. 5. c. 11.

Priscian, in speaking of Fable, calls Esop the inventor of it; but soon after he corrects himself, and adds, Usi sunt eâ vetustissimi quoque autores; Hesiodus, Archilochus, Plautus, Horatius. Nominantur autem ab inventoribus fabularum, aliæ Æsopiæ, aliæ Cypriæ, aliæ Lybicæ, aliæ Sybariticæ; omnes autem communiter Æsopiæ, quoniam

even of the ancient writers. It appears very plainly from the words of (*o*) Socrates and

in conventibus frequenter, ſolebat Æſopus fabulis uti. From Bayle, Art. Æſop. Note A.

Nunc fabularum cur ſit inventum genus
Brevi docebo. Servitus obnoxia:
Quia quæ volebat non audebat dicere,
Affectus proprios in fabellas tranſtulit;
Calumniamque fictis eluſit jocis:
Ego porro illius ſemitâ feci viam.
Phædrus, Introd. Lib. 3. ver. 30.

Avienus ſays, in the Pref. to his Fables, Hujus materiæ ducem nobis Æſopum noveris: qui reſponſo Delphici Apollinis monitus, ridicula orſus eſt, ut legenda firmaret. From Bayle, Note A. And Apollonius in Philoſtratus ſays, "That Æſop, not content with rejecting the fabulous ſtories of the poets, in favour of wiſdom, invented a new method." B. 5. ch. 5. From the ſame, Note H.

As the word Ridiculous is always uſed in a bad ſenſe in Engliſh, it may not be improper to obſerve, that Ridiculous in Latin was uſed in a good ſenſe, as well as in a bad; and it is to be taken in the former, in the quotation here from Avienus. 'Tis as much a commendation of Eſop, as the Feſtivus et Delectabilis of Gellius, p. xviii. Note 23; or the Hilariora Studia of Seneca, p. xlviii. Note 6. Thus, where Horace is preferring the humourous ſort of ſatire to the ſevere, he ſays,

Ridiculum acri
Fortius ac melius magnas plerumque ſecat res.
Lib. 1. Sat. 10. ver. 15.

And Phædrus, ſpeaking of Eſop's works, attributes half of their merit to this:

Duplex libelli dos eſt; quod riſum movet,
Et quod prudenti vitam conſilio monet.
Introd. Lib. 1. ver. 4.

(*o*) Socrates, in Plato's Phædo.

(*p*) Phædrus, each of whom translated some of the Fables of Esop, that he wrote them in prose; though the invention which generally attends them, and which is the more essential part in poetry, made the former regard them as a poetical work.

The distinguishing character of Esop's style seems to have been that of an (*q*) elegant simplicity; it was very (*r*) plain, short, and clear; and his writings have been highly admired for their good sense and usefulness, in all ages. The plans of his Fables are com-

(*p*) Æsopus auctor quam materiam repperit,
Hanc ego POLIVI versibus senariis.
Phædrus, Introd. Lib. 1. ver. 2.

(*q*) Quisquamne ita nitet, ut comparatus tibi non sordeat? Quis ita ad Æsopi venustatem, quis ad sophisticas Isocratis conclusiones, quis ad enthymemata Demosthenis, aut opulentiam, Tullianam, aut proprietatem nostri Maronis; quis ita affectet singula, ut tu imples omnia. Ausonius, in his Epistle to Symmachus: vol. 2. p. 642. Ed. Var.

(*r*) This appears very evidently, even from the imitations of his writings. Phædrus's style has commonly been admired for its particular simplicity and neatness; and he says, very strongly, that he imitates Esop in his manner, as well as in his matter.

Librum exarabo tertium Æsopi stilo.
L. 3. Prol. ver. 30.

Laertius has preserved a couplet in Socrates's translation of one of his Fables; remarkable only for its particular plainness.

And the Fables which Plutarch (in his banquet of the Sages) has put into Esop's own mouth, are remarkably short and clear.

mended for the same (*s*) elegance as his style. He has been highly admired for his writings of this kind in all ages. Quintilian recommends them (*t*) as the first object in the instruction of children; and Plato, when he is banishing the fabulous stories of Homer and (*u*) Hesiod, advises the use of this sort of Fables in his commonwealth; in both of which he is strongly followed by (*w*) Philostratus; who says, "That they were more proper than all other Fables, to inspire us with wisdom. The Athenians in the age when learning was at its greatest perfection among them, shewed their high opinion of Esop, and his writings, by the (*x*) noble statue they

(*s*) In quibuſdam (fabulis) et argumentum ex ficto locatur, et per mendacia ipſe relationis ordo contexitur; ut ſunt illæ Æſopi Fabulæ; elegantiâ fictionis illuſtres. Macrobius, in Somn. Scrip. Lib. 1. cap. 2.

(*t*) Eſopi fabellas, quæ fabulis nutricularum proximé ſuccedunt, narrare ſermone puro et nihil ſe ſupramodum extollente, deinde eandem gracilitatem ſtilo exigere condiſcant. Inſtitut. Orat. 1. c. 9.

(*u*) Plato De Republica. Lib. 2.

(*w*) Philoſtratus; Book 5. ch. 5.

(*x*) Æſopo ingentem ſtatuam poſuere Attici.
Phædrus, Epiſ. to B. 2. ver. 1.

The Greeks uſed to ſet up ſtatues, larger than the life, to compliment their kings, heroes, and gods: of this kind the ſtatue here mentioned, in honour of Eſop, ſeems to have been.

They ſet up at the ſame time, ſeven ſtatues to the famous cotemporary Sages of Greece; and this ſtatue of Eſop at the head of them all.

erected to his memory, and by the celebrated sculpture (*y*) they employed for that purpose.

The great excellence of his way of writing, consists in blending of (*z*) the agreeable and the instructive so well together: from which Horace might possibly take the hint for that rule, which he seems to distinguish (*a*) as the most considerable of any in his Art of Poetry.

'Tis no wonder that works so useful, so pleasing, and so much recommended, were in every body's hands: they were so especially at Athens (*b*), the great seat of science; and about the time, that arts (*c*) and know-

(*y*) The great Lyſippus.

(*z*) Thus, where Phædrus ſays, that he imitates Eſop, in his 1ſt book of Fables, he immediately adds,

Duplex libelli dos eſt; quod riſum movet,
Et quod prudenti vitam conſilio monet.
Introd. to B. 1. ver. 4.

A. Gellius prefers him to all the philoſophers on this very account; and Avienus attributes ſo happy a thought to an inſpiration from Heaven: (Note 86.) Apollonius did the ſame, though in a different manner; (Philoſtratus, B. 5. ch. 5.) the latter ſuppoſing this light to have been given him by Mercury, and the former from the oracle at Delphi.

(*a*) Omne tulit punctum, qui miſcuit utile dulci;
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.
De Art. Poet. ver. 343.

(*b*) It was a proverbial expreſſion there, for a man who was entirely ignorant; "That he had never read Eſop." The reaſon of this proverb (as the commentator on Ariſtophanes, ſays) was "their reading him there with eagerneſs."

(*c*) The Athenians paid that ſignal compliment to Eſop of ſetting up his ſtatue above thoſe of all the ſeven Sages,

ledge were both at their greatest height. The Fables of Esop was, generally, the first book (*d*) which was read by their youth, and, perhaps, one of the last, which some of them quitted.

(*e*) Plutarch mentions Esop among the authors most proper for forming philosophers; and indeed his distinguishing character was wisdom, attended (as has been shewn before) with a perpetual flow of pleasantry. Phædrus calls him, (*f*) the Sage; and says (*g*), "That he saw through all Nature.

It must be very difficult, at this distance of time, to determine which of the Greek Fables, that are published as Esops, were really of his writing. Several of them may be so; but we do not know how to distinguish them. I should think it more easy to catch him at the rebound; I mean, in the profest translations of him. Phædrus, the (*h*) first of

in that great age in which Lyſippus and Apelles, and Ariſtotle, Plato, and Xenophon flouriſhed.

(*d*) Fabulas primum tradere pueris ſolent——; quiâ animos eorum, adhuc molles, ad meliores facilè vias inſtituunt vitæ. Priſcian.

(*e*) De Audiendis Poetis.

(*f*) Sophus. Phæd. Lib. 3. Fab. 14 ver. 9.

(*g*) ——————Naris emunctæ ſenex.
Natura nunquam verba cui potuit dare.
Id. Lib. 3. Fab. 3. ver. 15.

(*h*) Phædrus, after ſpeaking of Eſop, ſays,
Quoniam occuparet alter ne primus forem,
Ne ſolus eſſet ſtudui. Cloſe to B. ii. ver. 6.

the Roman poets who wrote Fables, begins with informing his reader that he has (*i*) turned into verse several of those which (as was remarked before) were written in prose by Esop. He confirms this frequently afterwards, in general; and has pointed out some in particular, as translated from Esop. He makes mention of these much oftener (*k*) toward the beginning of his work, than in the following parts of it; and I am apt to think, that most of the Fables (*l*) in the last book are of his own invention. Avienus, the next

'Tis probable that Phædrus had not publiſhed his Fables, when Seneca wrote his conſolation to Polybius, towards the latter end of the reign of Claudius: for that philoſopher ſays in it to his friend: Non audeo te uſque eo producere, ut fabellas quoque, & Eſopeos logos, intentatum Romanis ingeniis opus ſolitâ tibi venuſtate connectas: difficile eſt quidem, ut ad hæc hilariora ſtudia jam vehementer perculſus animus tam cito poſſit accedere. Seneca, Conſol. ad Pol. c. 27.

(*i*) Phædrus Introd. to B. 1. ver. 2.

(*k*) L. 4. Fab. 2. 3. & 10.—L. 4. Fab. 16. He mentions Eſop and his actions in ſeveral others; but does not ſay thoſe Fables themſelves are taken from his. One would think, however, from what he ſays, Lib. 4 Fab. 20. that moſt of the foregoing Fables were taken from Eſop.

Quid judicare cogitur Livor modò,
Licet diſſimulet, pulchrè tamen intelligo.
Quicquid putabit eſſe dignum memoriæ,
Æſopi dicet; ſi quid minùs adriſerit,
A me contendet fictum quovis pignore;
Quem volu refelli jam nunc reſponſo meo:
Sive hoc ineptum, ſive laudandum eſt opus,
Invenit ille, noſtra perfecit manus.

(*l*) From the Introd. to Lib. 5.

Latin Fabulist that I know of, though at the distance of several (*m*) centuries, agrees with Phædrus in professing to (*n*) follow Esop, and giving his book the title of Esopian Fables; but does not point him out as the author of any one of them, in particular.

It has been already said (*o*), that Socrates translated some of his Fables. As the Athenians, not long after their putting that great man to death, grew as fond of his memory as they had been cruel to his person; it is probable, that this might also add at the same time to their esteem for Esop and his writings. However that be, this is certain, that it was about fifty years after the death of Socrates, that they erected (*p*) the statue so much in honour of Esop; and about a hundred, (*q*) that Demetrius Phalareus published an edition

(*m*) Avienus, according to Gyraldus, lived in the time of Theodosius and his sons. There are forty-two Fables in Elegiac verse, published as his, in Mattaire's Corpus Poet. Lat. vol. 2. p. 1338, &c.

(*n*) Hujus materiæ ducem nobis Æsopum noveris. From Bayle, Art. Æs. Note A.

(*o*) See note r, p. xxviii.

(*p*) Socrates was put to death 400 years before our Æra; and Lysippus, who made this statue of Esop, was in the height of his reputation under Alexander the Great, whose reign was from 336 to 324 ditto.

(*q*) Demetrius Phalareus (according to Dr. Blair's Tables, whose authority is also followed in the preceding note) was banished from Athens 303 years before our Æra. Fabricius says, that he published a collection of Esopian Fables; Art. Esop, Lib. 5. cap. 80: and another volume either of his Fables, or of anecdotes relating to him. Ibid. cap. 81.

of his Fables; as Diagoras had indeed done long (*r*) before, while Socrates was living.

The Fables which Planudes published as Esop's, were printed at Milan in 1480; soon after the art of printing was introduced into Italy: and afterwards by Aldus, in 1505. This Aldine edition was followed by several others; and particularly by Robert Stephens, at Paris, in 1546. It contained 149 fables (*s*); to which Nevelet added almost as many more, from some manuscripts in the Heidelberg Library, in his edition at Francfort in 1610; but these manuscripts, (as well as that of Planudes) too often betray their true authors; for the Monks are commended in the 3rd and the 119th of these additional Fables. 'Tis a great pity that a more judicious collection should not be made from all the best and most authentic manuscripts that could be procured; and perhaps it should be chiefly from such as (*t*) are previous to the times of Planudes.

(*r*) Diagoras was baniſhed from Athens in the 91ſt Olympiad; (from 416 to 413, before our Æra.) He publiſhed a collection of Fables (of the Phrygian, or Eſop) according to Tatian, and Maximus Tyrius. See Laertius, Lib. 5. cap. 80.

(*s*) His addition made them in all 297. See Fabricius's Bib. Gr. Art. Eſop.

(*t*) Mr. Boyle ſpeaks of one of about 500 years old; which belonged to Voſſius, and, as he ſays, was then at Leyden. Fabricius doubts it. Montfaucon, in his Diarium Italicum, promiſed to publiſh the Life of Eſop, with the Fables, as they were extant before the time of Planudes, from a manuſcript in the monaſtery of St. Mary at Florence. Fabricius, ibid.

AN

ESSAY

ON

FABLE.

INTRODUCTION.

WHOEVER undertakes to compoſe a Fable, whether of the ſublimer and more complex kind, as the epic and dramatic; or of the lower or more ſimple, as what has been called the Eſopean; ſhould make it his principal intention to illuſtrate ſome one moral or prudential maxim. To this point the compoſition in all its parts muſt be directed; and this will lead him to deſcribe ſome action proper to enforce the maxim he has choſen. In ſeveral reſpects therefore the greater Fable and the leſs agree. It is the buſineſs of both to teach ſome particular moral, exemplified by an action, and this enlivened by natural incidents. Both alike muſt be ſupported by appoſite and proper characters, and both be furniſhed with ſentiments and language ſuitable to the characters thus employed. I would by no means however infer, that, to produce one of theſe ſmall pieces requires the ſame degree of genius as to form an epic or dramatic Fable. All I would inſinuate, is, that the apologue has a right to ſome ſhare of our eſteem, from the relation it bears to the poems before-mentioned, as it is honourable to ſpring from a noble ſtem, although in ever ſo remote a

branch. A perfect Fable, even of this inferior kind, ſeems a much ſtronger proof of genius than the mere narrative of an event. The latter indeed requires judgment: the former, together with judgment, demands an effort of the imagination.

Having thus endeavoured to procure theſe little compoſitions as much regard as they may fairly claim, I proceed to treat of ſome particulars moſt eſſential to their character.

SECTION I.

Of the Truth or Moral of a Fable.

'TIS the very eſſence of a Fable to convey ſome moral or uſeful Truth beneath the ſhadow of an allegory. It is this chiefly that diſtinguiſhes a Fable from a Tale; and indeed gives it the pre-eminence in point of uſe and dignity. A Tale may conſiſt of an event either ſerious or comic; and, provided it be told agreeably, may be excellent in its kind, though it ſhould imply no ſort of moral. But the action or Fable is contrived on purpoſe to teach and to imprint ſome Truth; and ſhould clearly and obviouſly include the illuſtration of it in the very cataſtrophe.

The Truth to be preferred on this occaſion, ſhould neither be too obvious, nor trite, nor trivial. Such would ill deſerve the pains employed in Fable to convey it. As little alſo ſhould it be one that is very dubious, dark, or controverted. It ſhould be of ſuch a nature as to challenge the aſſent of every ingenious and ſober judgment; never a point of mere ſpeculation; but tending to inform or to remind the reader of the proper means that lead to happineſs, or at leaſt to

the ſeveral duties, decorums, and proprieties of conduct which each particular Fable endeavours to enforce.

The reaſon why Fable has been ſo much eſteemed in all ages, and in all countries, is perhaps owing to the polite manner in which its maxims are conveyed. The very article of giving inſtruction ſuppoſes at leaſt a ſuperiority of wiſdom in the adviſer; a circumſtance by no means favourable to the ready admiſſion of advice. 'Tis the peculiar excellence of Fable to wave this air of ſuperiority: it leaves the reader to collect the moral; who, by thus diſcovering more than is ſhown him, finds his principle of ſelf-love gratified inſtead of being diſguſted. The attention is either taken off from the adviſer; or, if otherwiſe, we are at leaſt flattered by his humility and addreſs.

Beſides, inſtruction, as conveyed by Fable, does not only lay aſide its lofty mien and ſupercilious aſpect, but appears dreſt in all the ſmiles and graces which can ſtrike the imagination, or engage the paſſions. It pleaſes, in order to convince; and it imprints its moral ſo much the deeper, in proportion as it entertains; ſo that we may be ſaid to feel our duties the very inſtant we comprehend them.

I am very ſenſible with what difficulty a Fable is brought to a ſtrict agreement with the foregoing account of it. This, however, ought to be the writer's aim. 'Tis the ſimple manner in which the Morals of Eſop are interwoven with his Fables, that diſtinguiſhes him, and gives him the preference to all other Mythologiſts. His mountain delivered of a mouſe, produces the Moral of his Fable, in ridicule of pompous pretenders; and his Crow, when ſhe drops her cheeſe, lets fall, as it were by accident, the ſtrongeſt admonition againſt the power of flattery. There is no need of a ſeparate ſentence to explain it; no poſſibility of impreſſing it deeper, by that load we too often ſee of accumulated reflections. Indeed the Fable of the Cock and the Precious Stone is in this reſpect very excep-

tionable. The leſſon it inculcates is ſo dark and ambiguous, that different expoſitors have given it quite oppoſite interpretations; ſome imputing the Cock's rejection of the diamond to his wiſdom, and others to his ignorance

Strictly ſpeaking then, one ſhould render needleſs any detached or explicit Moral Eſop, the father of this kind of writing, diſclaimed any ſuch aſſiſtance. 'Tis the province of Fable to give it birth in the mind of the perſon for whom it is intended; otherwiſe the precept is direct, which is contrary to the nature and end of allegory. However, in order to give all neceſſary aſſiſtance to young readers, an Index is added to this collection, containing the Subject or Moral of each Fable, to which the reader may occaſionally apply.

After all, the greateſt fault in any compoſition (for I can hardly allow that name to riddles) is obſcurity. There can be no purpoſe anſwered by a work that is unintelligible. Annibal Carracci, and Raphael himſelf, rather than riſk ſo unpardonable a fault, have admitted verbal explanations into ſome of their beſt pictures. It muſt be confeſſed, that every ſtory is not capable of telling its own Moral. In a caſe of this nature, and this only, it ſhould be expreſsly introduced. Perhaps alſo where the point is doubtful, we ought to ſhow enough for the leſs acute, even at the hazard of ſhowing too much for the more ſagacious: who, for this very reaſon, that they are more ſagacious, will pardon a ſuperfluity which is ſuch to them alone.

But, on theſe occaſions, it has been matter of diſpute, whether the Moral is better introduced at the end or beginning of a Fable Eſop, as I ſaid before, univerſally rejected any ſeparate Moral. Thoſe we now find at the cloſe of his Fables, were placed there by other hands. Among the ancients, Phædrus; and Gay, among the moderns, inſerted theirs at the beginning: La Motte prefers them at the concluſion; and Fontaine diſpoſes of them indiſcriminately, at the begin-

ning or end, as he ſees convenient. If, amidſt the authority of ſuch great names, I might venture to mention my own opinion, I ſhould rather prefix them as an introduction, than add them as an appendage. For I would neither pay my reader nor myſelf ſo bad a compliment, as to ſuppoſe, after he had read the Fable, that he was not able to diſcover its meaning. Beſides, when the Moral of a Fable is not very prominent and ſtriking, a leading thought at the beginning puts the reader in a proper track. He knows the game which he purſues: and, like a beagle on a warm ſcent, he follows the ſport with alacrity, in proportion to his intelligence. On the other hand, if he has no previous intimation of the deſign, he is puzzled throughout the Fable; and cannot determine upon its merit without the trouble of a freſh peruſal. A ray of light, imparted at firſt, may ſhow them the tendency and propriety of every expreſſion as he goes along; but while he travels in the dark, no wonder if he ſtumble or miſtake his way.

SECTION II.

Of the Action and Incidents proper for a Fable.

IN chooſing the action, or allegory, three conditions are altogether expedient. 1 It muſt be clear: that is, it ought to ſhow without equivocation, preciſely and obviouſly, what we intend ſhould be underſtood. 2. It muſt be one and entire: that is, it muſt not be compoſed of ſeparate and independent actions, but muſt tend, in all its circumſtances, to the completion of one ſingle event. 3. It muſt be natural; that is, founded if not on truth, at leaſt on probability; on popular opinion; on that relation and analogy which things bear to one another, when we have gratuitouſly endowed them with the human faculties of ſpeech and reaſon. And theſe conditions are taken from the na-

ture of the human mind; which cannot endure to be embarraſſed, to be bewildered, or to be deceived.

A Fable offends againſt perſpicuity, when it leaves us doubtful what truth the Fabuliſt intended to convey. We have a ſtriking example of this in Dr. Croxall's Fable of the creaking Wheel. "A Coachman, ſays he, hearing one of his Wheels creak, was ſurpriſed; but more eſpecially, when he perceived that it was the worſt Wheel of the whole ſet, and which he thought had but little pretence to take ſuch a liberty. But, upon his demanding the reaſon why it did ſo, the Wheel replied, that it was natural for people, who laboured under any affliction or calamity to complain." Who would imagine this Fable deſigned, as the author informs us, for an admonition to repreſs, or keep our complaints to ourſelves, or, if we muſt let our ſorrows ſpeak, to take care it be done in ſolitude and retirement? The ſtory of this Fable is not well imagined: at leaſt, if meant to ſupport the Moral which the author has drawn from it.

A Fable is faulty in reſpect to unity, when the ſeveral circumſtances point different ways, and do not center, like ſo many lines, in one diſtinct and unambiguous Moral. An example of this kind is furniſhed by La Motte in the obſervation he makes upon Fontaine's two Pigeons. "Theſe Pigeons had a reciprocal affection for each other. One of them ſhowing a deſire to travel was earneſtly oppoſed by his companion, but in vain. The former ſets out upon his rambles, and encounters a thouſand unforeſeen dangers; while the latter ſuffers almoſt as much at home, through his apprehenſion for his roving friend. However, our traveller, after many hair-breadth eſcapes, returns at length in ſafety back, and the two Pigeons are, once again, mutually happy in each other's company." Now the application of this Fable is utterly vague and uncertain, for want of circumſtances to determine, whether the author deſigned principally to repreſent the dangers of

the Traveller; his friend's anxiety during his abſence; or their mutual happineſs on his return. Whereas, had the travelling Pigeon met with no diſaſters on his way, but only found all pleaſures inſipid for want of his friend's participation; and had he returned from no other motive than a deſire of ſeeing him again, the whole then had happily cloſed in this one conſpicuous inference, that the preſence of a real friend is the moſt deſirable of all gratifications.

The laſt rule I have mentioned, that a Fable ſhould be natural, may be violated ſeveral ways. 'Tis oppoſed when we make creatures enter into unnatural aſſociations. Thus the Sheep or the Goat muſt not be made to hunt with the Lion; and it is yet more abſurd, to repreſent the Lion as falling in love with the Foreſter's daughter. 'Tis infringed, by aſcribing to them appetites and paſſions that are not conſiſtent with their known characters; or elſe by employing them in ſuch occupations as are foreign and unſuitable to their reſpective natures. A Fox ſhould not be ſaid to long for Grapes; an Hedge-hog pretend to drive away Flies; nor a Partridge offer his ſervice to delve in a Vineyard. A ponderous iron and an earthern Vaſe ſhould not ſwim together down a river; and he that ſhould make his Gooſe lay golden eggs, would ſhow a luxuriant fancy, but very little judgment. In ſhort, nothing beſides the faculty of ſpeech and reaſon, which Fable has been allowed to confer, even upon inanimates, muſt ever contradict the nature of things, or at leaſt the commonly received opinions concerning them.

Opinions indeed, although erroneous, if they either are, or have been univerſally received, may afford ſufficient foundation for a Fable. The Mandrake, here, may be made to utter groans; and the dying Swan to pour forth her elegy. The Sphynx and the Phœnix, the Syren and the Centaur, have all the exiſtence that is requiſite for Fable. Nay, the Goblin, the Fairy, and even the man in the Moon, may have each his province

allotted him, provided it be not an improper one. Here the notoriety of opinion ſupplies the place of fact, and in this manner truth may fairly be deduced from falſehood.

Concerning the incidents proper for Fable, it is a rule without exception, that they ought always to be few; it being foreign to the nature of this compoſition to admit of much variety. Yet a Fable with only one ſingle incident may poſſibly appear too naked. If Eſop and Phædrus are herein ſometimes too ſparing, Fontaine and La Motte are as often too profuſe. In this, as in moſt other matters, a medium certainly is beſt. In a word the incidents ſhould not only be few, but ſhort; and like thoſe in the Fables of "the Swallow and other Birds," "the Miller and his Son," and "the Court and Country Mouſe," they muſt naturally ariſe out of the ſubject, and ſerve to illuſtrate and enforce the Moral.

SECTION III.

Of the Perſons, Characters, and Sentiments of Fable.

THE race of animals firſt preſent themſelves as the proper actors in this little Drama. They are indeed a ſpecies that approaches, in many reſpects, ſo near to our own, that we need only lend them ſpeech, in order to produce a ſtriking reſemblance. It would however be unreaſonable to expect a ſtrict and univerſal ſimilitude. There is a certain meaſure and degree of analogy, with which the moſt diſcerning reader will reſt contented: for inſtance, he will accept the properties of animals, although neceſſary and invariable, as the images of our inclinations, though never ſo free. To require more than this, were to ſap the very foundations of allegory; and even to deprive ourſelves of half the pleaſure that flows from poetry in general.

Solomon ſends us to the Ant, to learn the wiſdom of induſtry: and our inimitable ethic poet introduces Nature herſelf as giving us a ſimilar kind of counſel.

Thus then to Man the Voice of Nature ſpake:
"Go, from the Creatures thy inſtructions take—
"There all the forms of ſocial union find,
"And thence let reaſon late inſtruct mankind."

He ſuppoſes that animals in their native characters, without the advantages of ſpeech and reaſon, which are aſſigned them by the Fabuliſts, may, in regard to Morals, as well as Arts, become examples to the human race. Indeed I am afraid we have ſo far deviated into aſcititious appetites and fantaſtic manners, as to find the expediency of copying from them that ſimplicity we ourſelves have loſt. If animals in themſelves may be thus exemplary, how much more may they be made inſtructive, under the direction of an able Fabuliſt; who, by conferring upon them the gift of language, contrives to make their inſtincts more intelligible, and their examples more determinate?

But theſe are not his only actors. The Fabuliſt has one advantage over all other writers whatſoever, as all the works both of art and nature are more immediately at his diſpoſal. He has, in this reſpect, a liberty not allowed to epic, or dramatic writers, who are undoubtedly more limited in the choice of perſons to be employed. He has authority to preſs into his ſervice every kind of exiſtence under heaven: not only beaſts, birds, inſects, and all the animal creation, but flowers, ſhrubs, trees, and all the tribe of vegetables. Even mountains, foſſils, minerals, and the inanimate works of nature, diſcourſe articulately at his command, and act the part which he aſſigns them. The virtues, vices, and every property of beings, receive from him a local habitation and a name. In ſhort, he may perſonify, be-

ſtow life, ſpeech, and action, on whatever he thinks proper.

It is eaſy to imagine what a ſource of novelty and variety this muſt open, to a genius capable of conceiving, and of employing, theſe ideal perſons in a proper manner: what an opportunity it affords him to diverſify his images, and to treat the fancy with change of objects, while he ſtrengthens the underſtanding, or regulates the paſſions, by a ſucceſſion of truths! To raiſe beings like theſe into a ſtate of action and intelligence, gives the Fabuliſt an undoubted claim to the firſt character of the poet, a Creator. I rank him not, as I ſaid before, with the writers of epic or dramatic poems; but the maker of pins or needles is as much an artiſt, as an anchor-ſmith: and a painter in miniature may ſhow as much ſkill, as he who paints in the largeſt proportions.

When theſe perſons are once raiſed, we muſt carefully enjoin them proper taſks; and aſſign them ſentiments and language ſuitable to their ſeveral natures, and reſpective properties.

A Raven ſhould not be extolled for her voice, nor a Bear be repreſented with an elegant ſhape. 'Twere a very obvious inſtance of abſurdity, to paint an Hare, cruel; or a Wolf, compaſſionate. An Aſs were but ill qualified to be general of an army, though he may well enough ſerve perhaps for one of the trumpeters. But ſo long as popular opinion allows to the Lion, magnanimity; rage, to the Tyger; ſtrength, to the Mule; cunning, to the Fox; and buffoonery, to the Monkey; why may they not ſupport the characters of an Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Ulyſſes, and Therſites? The truth is, when Moral actions are, with judgment, attributed to the brute creation, we ſcarce perceive that Nature is at all violated by the Fabuliſt. He appears, at moſt, to have only tranſlated their language. His Lions, Wolves, and Foxes, behave and

argue as thoſe creatures would, had they originally been endowed with the human faculties of ſpeech and reaſon.

But greater art is yet required, whenever we perſonify inanimate beings. Here the copy ſo far deviates from the great lines of Nature, that without the niceſt care, reaſon will revolt againſt the fiction. However, beings of this ſort, managed ingeniouſly, and with addreſs, recommend the Fabuliſt's invention by the grace of novelty, and of variety. Indeed the analogy between things natural and artificial, animate and inanimate, is often ſo very ſtriking, that we can, with ſeeming propriety, give paſſions and ſentiments to every individual part of exiſtence. Appearance favours the deception. The Vine may be enamoured of the Elm; her embraces teſtify her paſſion. The ſwelling Mountain may, natural enough, be delivered of a Mouſe. The Gourd may reproach the Pine; and the Sky-rocket inſult the Stars. The Axe may ſolicit a new Handle of the Foreſt; and the Moon, in her female character, requeſt a faſhionable Garment. Here is nothing incongruous; nothing that ſhocks the reader with impropriety. On the other hand, were the Axe to deſire a fine perriwig, and the Moon petition for a new pair of boots; probability would then be violated, and the abſurdity become too glaring.

SECTION IV.

On the Language of Fable.

THE moſt beautiful Fables that ever were invented may be diſfigured by the Language in which they are clothed. Of this, poor Eſop, in ſome of his Engliſh dreſſes, affords a melancholy proof. The ordinary ſtyle of Fable ſhould be familiar, but it ſhould alſo be elegant. Were I to inſtance any ſtyle that I ſhould

prefer on this occaſion, it ſhould be that of Mr. Addiſon's little tales in the Spectator. That eaſe and ſimplicity, that conciſeneſs and propriety, that ſubdued and decent humour he ſo remarkably diſcovers in thoſe compoſitions, ſeem to have qualified him for a Fabuliſt, almoſt beyond any other writer. But to return:

The Familiar, ſays Mr. La Motte, to whoſe ingenious Eſſay I have often been obliged in this diſcourſe, is the general tone, or accent of Fable. It was thought ſufficient, on its firſt appearance, to lend the animals our moſt common language. Nor indeed have they any extraordinary pretenſions to the ſublime; it being requiſite they ſhould ſpeak with the ſame ſimplicity that they behave.

The Familiar, alſo, is more proper for inſinuation than the elevated; this being the language of reflection, as the former is the voice of ſentiment. We guard ourſelves againſt the one, but lie open to the other; and inſtruction will always the moſt effectually ſway us, when it appears leaſt jealous of its rights and privileges.

The Familiar ſtyle however that is here required, notwithſtanding that appearance of Eaſe which is its character, is perhaps more difficult to write, than the elevated or ſublime. A writer more readily perceives when he has riſen above the common language, than he perceives, in ſpeaking this language, whether he has made the choice that is moſt ſuitable to the occaſion; and it is nevertheleſs, upon this happy choice that all the charm of the familiar depends. Moreover, the elevated ſtyle deceives and ſeduces, although it be not the beſt choſen; whereas the familiar can procure itſelf no ſort of reſpect, if it be not eaſy, natural, juſt, delicate, and unaffected. A Fabuliſt muſt therefore beſtow great attention upon his ſtyle; and even labour it ſo much the more, that it may appear to have coſt him no pains at all.

The authority of Fontaine juſtifies this opinion in regard to ſtyle. His Fables are perhaps the beſt examples

of the genteel familiar, as Sir Roger L'Eſtrange affords the groſſeſt, of the indelicate and low. When we read that "while the Frog and the Mouſe were diſputing it at ſword's point, down comes a Kite powdering upon them in the interim, and gobbles up both together to part the fray." And where the Fox reproaches "a bevy of jolly goſſiping Wenches making merry over a diſh of Pullets, that, if he but peeped into a hen-rooſt, they always made a bawling with their dogs and their baſtards; while you yourſelves, ſays he, can lie ſtuffing your guts with your Hens and your Capons, and not a word of the pudding." This may be familiar, but is alſo coarſe and vulgar; and cannot fail to diſguſt a reader that has the leaſt degree of taſte or delicacy.

The ſtyle of Fable then muſt be ſimple and familiar; and it muſt likewiſe be correct and elegant. By the former, I would adviſe that it ſhould not be loaded with figure and metaphor; that the diſpoſition of words be natural; the turn of ſentences, eaſy; and their conſtruction, unembarraſſed. By elegance, I would exclude all coarſe and provincial terms; all affected and puerile conceits; all obſolete and pedantic phraſes. To this I would adjoin, as the word perhaps implies, a certain finiſhing poliſh, which gives a grace and ſpirit to the whole; and which, though it have always the appearance of nature, is almoſt ever the effect of art.

But, notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid, there are ſome occaſions on which it is allowable, and even expedient to change the ſtyle. The language of a Fable muſt riſe or fall in conformity to the ſubject. A Lion, when introduced in his regal capacity, muſt hold diſcourſe in a ſtrain ſomewhat more elevated than a Country Mouſe. The Lioneſs then becomes his Queen, and the beaſts of the foreſt are called his Subjects: a method that offers at once to the imagination, both the animal and the perſon he is deſigned to repreſent. Again, the Buffoon-monkey ſhould avoid that pomp of phraſe, which the Owl employs as her beſt pretence

to wiſdom. Unleſs the ſtyle be thus judiciouſly varied, it will be impoſſible to preſerve a juſt diſtinction of character.

Deſcriptions, at once conciſe and pertinent, add a grace to Fable; but are then moſt happy, when included in the action: whereof the Fable of Boreas and the Sun affords us an example. An epithet well choſen is often a deſcription in itſelf; and ſo much the more agreeable, as it the leſs retards us in our purſuit of the cataſtrophe.

I might enlarge much further on the ſubject, but perhaps I may appear to have been too diffuſe already. Let it ſuffice to hint, that little ſtrokes of humour, when ariſing naturally from the ſubject, and incidental reflections, when kept in due ſubordination to the principal, add a value to theſe compoſitions. Theſe latter, however, ſhould be employed very ſparingly, and with great addreſs; be very few, and very ſhort. It is ſcarcely enough that they naturally reſult from the ſubject: they ſhould be ſuch as may appear neceſſary and eſſential parts of the Fable. And when theſe embelliſhments, pleaſing in themſelves, tend to illuſtrate the main action, they then afford that nameleſs grace remarkable in Fontaine and ſome few others; and which perſons of the beſt diſcernment will more eaſily conceive than they can explain.

FABLES.

BOOK I.

FROM THE ANCIENTS.

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FABLE I.

The Trees and the Bramble.

THE Iſraelites, ever murmuring and diſcontented under the reign of Jehovah, were deſirous of having a king, like the reſt of the nations. They offered the kingdom to Gideon their deliverer; to him, and to his poſterity after him: he generouſly refuſed their offer, and reminded them, that Jehovah was their king. When Gideon was dead, Abimelech, his ſon by a concubine, ſlew all his other ſons to the number of ſeventy, Jotham alone eſcaping; and by the aſſiſtance of the Shechemites made himſelf king. Jotham, to repreſent to them their folly, and to ſhew them, that the moſt deſerving are generally the leaſt ambitious, whereas the worthleſs graſp at power with eagerneſs, and exerciſe it with inſolence and tyranny, ſpake to them in the following manner:

Hearken unto Me, ye men of Shechem, ſo may God hearken unto You. The trees, grown weary of the ſtate of freedom and equality in which God had placed them, met together to chooſe and to anoint a king over them: and they ſaid to the Olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the Olive-tree ſaid unto them, Shall I quit my fatneſs wherewith God and man is honoured, to diſquiet myſelf with the cares of government, and to rule over the trees? And they ſaid unto the Fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the Fig-tree ſaid unto them, Shall I bid adieu to my ſweetneſs and my pleaſant fruit, to take upon me the painful charge of royalty, and to be ſet over the trees? Then ſaid the trees unto the Vine, Come thou and reign over us But the Vine ſaid alſo unto them, Shall I leave my wine, which honoureth God and cheereth man, to bring upon myſelf nothing but trouble and anxiety, and to become king of the trees? we are happy in our preſent lot: ſeek ſome other to reign over you. Then ſaid all the trees unto the Bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the Bramble ſaid unto them, I will be your king; come ye all under my ſhadow, and be ſafe; obey me, and I will grant you my protection. But if you obey me not, out of the Bramble ſhall come forth a fire, which ſhall devour even the cedars of Lebanon.

FABLE II.

The Frogs petitioning Jupiter for a King.

AS Eſop was travelling over Greece, he happened to paſs through Athens juſt after Piſiſtratus had aboliſhed the popular ſtate, and uſurped a ſovereign power; when perceiving that the Athenians bore the yoke, though mild and eaſy, with much impatience, he related to them the following fable:

The commonwealth of Frogs, a diſcontented, variable race, weary of liberty, and fond of change, petitioned Jupiter to grant them a king. The good-natured deity, in order to indulge this their requeſt, with as little miſchief to the petitioners as poſſible, threw them down a Log. At firſt they regarded their new monarch with great reverence, and kept from him at a moſt reſpectful diſtance: but perceiving his tame and peaceable diſpoſition,

they by degrees ventured to approach him with more familiarity, till at length they conceived for him the utmoſt contempt. In this diſpoſition, they renewed their requeſt to Jupiter, and intreated him to beſtow upon them another king. The Thunderer in his wrath ſent them a Crane, who no ſooner took poſſeſſion of his new dominions, than he began to devour his ſubjects, one after another, in a moſt capricious and tyrannical manner. They were now far more diſſatisfied than before; when applying to Jupiter a third time, they were diſmiſſed with this reproof, that the evil they complained of they had imprudently brought upon themſelves; and that they had no other remedy now but to ſubmit to it with patience.

FABLE III.

The Belly and the Limbs.

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, a Roman conſul, being deputed by the ſenate to appeaſe a dangerous tumult and ſedition of the people, who refuſed to pay the taxes neceſſary for carrying on the buſineſs of the ſtate; convinced them of their folly, by delivering to them the following fable:

My friends and countrymen, ſaid he, attend to my words: It once happened that the Members of the human body, taking ſome exception at the conduct of the Belly, reſolved no longer to grant him the uſual ſupplies. The Tongue firſt, in a ſeditious ſpeech, aggravated their grievances; and after highly extolling the activity and diligence of the Hands and Feet, ſet forth how hard and unreaſonable it was, that the fruits of their labour

ſhould be ſquandered away upon the inſatiable craving of a fat and indolent Paunch, which was entirely uſeleſs, and unable to do any thing towards helping himſelf. This ſpeech was received with unanimous applauſe by all the Members. Immediately the Hands declared they would work no more; the Feet determined to carry no farther the load of guts with which they had hitherto been oppreſſed; nay, the very Teeth refuſed to prepare a ſingle morſel more for his uſe. In this diſtreſs, the Belly beſought them to conſider maturely, and not foment ſo ſenſeleſs a rebellion. There is none of you, ſays he, can be ignorant that whatſoever you beſtow upon me, is immediately converted to your uſe, and diſperſed by me for the good of you all into every Limb. But he remonſtrated in vain; for during the clamours of paſſion, the voice of reaſon is always diſregarded. It being therefore impoſſible for him to quiet the tumult, he ſtarved for want of their aſſiſtance, and the body waſted away to a ſkeleton. The Limbs grown weak and languid, were ſenſible at laſt of their error, and would fain have returned to their reſpective duties; but it was now too late, death had taken poſſeſſion of the whole, and they all periſhed together.

FABLE IV.

The Wolf and the Shepherds.

HOW apt are men to condemn in others what they practiſe themſelves without ſcruple!

A Wolf, ſays Plutarch, peeping into a hut, where a company of Shepherds were regaling themſelves with a joint of mutton; Lord, ſaid he, what a clamour would theſe men have raiſed, if they had catched Me at ſuch a banquet!

FABLE V.

The Fox and the * Swallow.

ARISTOTLE informs us, that the following fable was ſpoken by Eſop to the Samians, on a debate upon changing their miniſters, who were accuſed of plundering the commonwealth.

A Fox ſwimming acroſs a river, happened to be entangled in ſome weeds that grew near the bank, from which he was unable to extricate himſelf. As he lay thus expoſed to whole ſwarms of flies, who were galling him and ſucking his blood; a Swallow obſerving his diſtreſs, kindly offered to drive them away. By no means, ſaid the Fox; for if theſe ſhould be chaſed away, who are already ſufficiently gorged, another more hungry ſwarm would ſucceed, and I ſhould be robbed of every remaining drop of blood in my veins.

* Inſtead of the Swallow, it was originally a Hedge-Hog; but as that creature ſeemed very unfit for the buſineſs of driving away flies, 'twas thought more proper to ſubſtitute the Swallow.

FABLE VI.

The Fox and the Raven.

A FOX obſerving a Raven perched on the branch of a tree, with a fine piece of cheeſe in her mouth, immediately began to conſider how he might poſſeſs himſelf of ſo delicious a morſel. Dear madam, ſaid he, I am extremely glad to have the pleaſure of ſeeing you this morning; your beautiful ſhape, and ſhining feathers, are the delight of my eyes; and would you condeſcend to favour me with a ſong, I doubt not but your voice is equal to the reſt of your accompliſhments. Deluded with this flattering ſpeech, the tranſported Raven opened her mouth, in order to give him a ſpecimen of her pipe, when down dropt the cheeſe; which the Fox immediately ſnatching up, bore it away in triumph, leaving the Raven to lament her credulous vanity at her leiſure.

FABLE VII.

The Fox and the Stork.

THE Fox, though in general more inclined to roguery than wit, had once a ſtrong inclination to play the wag with his neighbour the Stork. He accordingly invited her to dinner in great form; but when it came upon the table, the Stork found it conſiſted intirely of different ſoups, ſerved up in broad ſhallow diſhes, ſo that ſhe could only dip in the end of her bill, but could not poſſibly ſatisfy her hunger. The Fox lapped it up very readily, and every now and then, addreſſing himſelf to his gueſt, deſired to know how ſhe liked her entertainment; hoped that every thing was ſeaſoned to her mind; and proteſted he was very ſorry to ſee her eat ſo ſparingly. The Stork, perceiving ſhe was played upon, took no notice of it, but pretended to like every diſh extremely; and at parting, preſſed the Fox ſo earneſtly to return her viſit, that he could

not in civility refuſe. The day arrived, and he repaired to his appointment; but to his great mortification, when dinner appeared, he found it compoſed of minced meat, ſerved up in long narrow necked glaſſes; ſo that he was only tantalized with the ſight of what it was impoſſible for him to taſte. The Stork thruſt in her long bill, and helped herſelf very plentifully; then turning to Reynard, who was eagerly licking the outſide of a jar where ſome ſauce had been ſpilled—I am very glad, ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, that you ſeem to have ſo good an appetite; I hope you will make as hearty a dinner at my table as I did the other day at yours. Reynard hung down his head, and looked very much diſpleaſed.—Nay, nay, ſaid the Stork, don't pretend to be out of humour about the matter; they that cannot take a jeſt, ſhould never make one.

FABLE VIII.

The Daw with borrowed Feathers.

WHEN a pert young templer, or city apprentice, ſets up for a fine gentleman, with the aſſiſtance of an embroidered waiſtcoat and Dreſden ruffles, but without one qualification proper to the character, how frequently does it happen, that he is laughed at by his equals, and deſpiſed by thoſe whom he preſumed to imitate!

A pragmatical Jackdaw was vain enough to imagine, that he wanted nothing but the coloured plumes, to render him as elegant a bird as the Peacock: puffed up with this wiſe conceit, he dreſſed himſelf with a ſufficient quantity of their moſt beautiful feathers, and in this borrowed garb, forſaking his old companions, endeavoured to paſs for a Peacock; but he no ſooner attempted to aſſociate with theſe genteel creatures, than an affected ſtrut be-

trayed the vain pretender. The offended Peacocks, plucking from him their degraded feathers, ſoon ſtripped him of his finery, reduced him to a mere Jackdaw, and drove him back to his brethren; by whom he was now equally deſpiſed, and juſtly puniſhed with deriſion and contempt.

FABLE IX.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

WHEN cruelty and injuſtice are armed with power, and determined on oppreſſion, the ſtrongeſt pleas of innocence are preferred in vain.

A Wolf and a Lamb were accidentally quenching their thirſt together at the ſame rivulet. The Wolf ſtood towards the head of the ſtream, and the Lamb at ſome diſtance below. The injurious beaſt, reſolved on a quarrel, fiercely demands—— How dare you diſturb the water which I am drink-

ing? The poor Lamb, all trembling, replies, How, I beſeech you, can that poſſibly be the caſe, ſince the current ſets from you to me? Diſconcerted by the force of truth, he changes the accuſation: Six months ago, ſays he, you vilely ſlandered me. Impoſſible, returns the Lamb, for I was not then born. No matter, it was your father then, or ſome of your relations; and immediately ſeizing the innocent Lamb, he tore him to pieces.

FABLE X.

The Mountain in Labour.

A RUMOUR once prevailed, that a neighbouring mountain was in labour: it was affirmed, that ſhe had been heard to utter prodigious groans; and a general expectation had been raiſed, that ſome extraordinary birth was at hand. Multitudes flocked with much eagerneſs to be witneſſes of the wonderful event; one expecting her to be delivered

of a giant; another of ſome enormous monſter; and all were ſuſpended in earneſt expectation of ſomewhat grand and aſtoniſhing. When after waiting with great impatience a conſiderable time, behold! out crept a Mouſe.

FABLE XI.

The Boys and the Frogs.

ON the margin of a large lake, which was inhabited by a great number of Frogs, a company of Boys happened to be at play. Their diverſion was duck and drake; and whole vollies of ſtones were thrown into the water, to the great annoyance and danger of the poor terrified Frogs. At length one of the moſt hardy, lifting up his head above the ſurface of the lake; Ah, dear children, ſaid he, why will ye learn ſo ſoon the cruel practices of your race? Conſider, I beſeech you, that though this may be ſport to you, 'tis death to us.

FABLE XII.

The Lark and her Young.

A LARK having built her neſt in a field of corn, it grew ripe before her Young were well able to fly. Apprehenſive for their ſafety, ſhe enjoined them while ſhe went out in order to provide for their ſubſiſtence, to liſten very attentively to any diſcourſe they might hear about reaping the field. At her return, they told her, that the farmer and his ſon had been there, and had agreed to ſend to ſome of their neighbours, to aſſiſt them in cutting it down the next day. And ſo they depend, it ſeems, upon neighbours, ſaid the mother: very well: then I think we have no occaſion to be afraid of to-morrow. The next day ſhe went out, and left with them the ſame injunction as before. When ſhe returned, they acquainted her, that the farmer and his ſon had again been there, but as none of their neighbours came to their aſſiſtance, they had deferred reaping till the next day, and intended to ſend for

help to their friends and relations. I think we may ſtill venture another day, ſays the mother; but however, be careful, as before, to let me know what paſſes in my abſence. They now inform her that the farmer and his ſon had a third time viſited the fields; and finding that neither friend nor relation had regarded their ſummons, they were determined to come the next morning and cut it down themſelves. Nay, then, replied the Lark, it is time to think of removing: for as they now depend only upon themſelves for doing their own buſineſs it will undoubtedly be performed.

FABLE XIII.

The Stag drinking.

A STAG quenching his thirſt in a clear lake, was ſtruck with the beauty of his horns, which he ſaw reflected in the water. At the ſame time, obſerving the extreme ſlenderneſs of his legs;

What a pity it is, ſaid he, that ſo fine a creature ſhould be furniſhed with ſo deſpicable a ſet of ſpindleſhanks! what a truly noble animal I ſhould be, were my legs in any degree anſwerable to my horns! In the midſt of this ſoliloquy, he was alarmed with the cry of a pack of hounds. He immediately flies through the foreſt, and leaves his purſuers ſo far behind, that he might probably have eſcaped; but taking into a thick wood, his horns were entangled in the branches, where he was held till the hounds came up, and tore him in pieces. In his laſt moments, he thus exclaimed—How ill do we judge of our true advantages! the legs which I deſpiſe would have borne me away in ſafety, had not my favourite antlers betrayed me to ruin.

FABLE XIV.

The Swallow and other Birds.

A SWALLOW obſerving an huſbandman employed in ſowing hemp, called the little Birds together, and informed them what the farmer was

about. He told them that hemp was the material from which the nets, ſo fatal to the feathered race, were compoſed; and adviſed them unanimouſly to join in picking it up, in order to prevent the conſequences. The Birds, either diſbelieving his information, or neglecting his advice, gave themſelves no trouble about the matter. In a little time the hemp appeared above ground; the friendly Swallow again addreſſed himſelf to them, told them it was not yet too late, provided they would immediately ſet about the work, before the ſeed had taken too deep root. But they ſtill rejecting his advice, he forſook their ſociety, repaired for ſafety to towns and cities, there built his habitation, and kept his reſidence. One day, as he was ſkimming along the ſtreets, he happened to ſee a large parcel of thoſe very birds, impriſoned in a cage, on the ſhoulders of a bird-catcher. Unhappy wretches, ſaid he, you now feel the puniſhment of your former neglect. But thoſe, who, having no foreſight of their own, deſpiſe the wholeſome admonition of their friends, deſerve the miſchiefs which their own obſtinacy or negligence brings upon their heads.

FABLE XV.

The Aſs and the Lap-dog.

AN Aſs, who lived in the ſame houſe with a favourite Lap dog, obſerving the ſuperior degree of affection, which the little minion enjoyed, imagined he had nothing more to do, in order to obtain an equal ſhare in the good graces of the family, than to imitate the Lap-dog's playful and endearing careſſes. Accordingly, he began to friſk about before his maſter, kicking up his heels and braying, in an aukward affectation of wantonneſs and pleaſantry: This ſtrange behaviour could not fail of raiſing much laughter, which the Aſs miſtaking for approbation and encouragement, he proceeded to leap upon his maſter's breaſt, and began very familiarly to lick his face; but he was preſently convinced, by the force of a good cudgel, that what is ſprightly and agreeable in one, may in another be juſtly cenſured as rude and impertinent; and that the ſureſt way to gain eſteem is for every one to act ſuitably to his own natural genius and character.

FABLE XVI.

The Lion and the Mouſe.

A LION by accident laid his paw upon a poor innocent Mouſe. The frighted little creature imagining ſhe was juſt going to be devoured, begged hard for her life, urged that clemency was the faireſt attribute of power, and earneſtly entreated his majeſty not to ſtain his illuſtrious paws with the blood of ſo inſignificant an animal; upon which the Lion very generouſly ſet her at liberty. It happened a few days afterwards, that the Lion, ranging for prey, fell into the toils of the hunter. The Mouſe heard his roarings, knew the voice of her benefactor, and immediately repairing to his aſſiſtance, gnawed in pieces the meſhes of the net, and by delivering her preſerver, convinced him that there is no creature ſo much below another, but may have it in his power to return a good office.

FABLE XVII.

The Wolf and the Crane.

A WOLF having with too much greedineſs ſwallowed a bone, it unfortunately ſtuck in his throat; and in the violence of his pain he applied to ſeveral animals, earneſtly entreating them to extract it. None cared to hazard the dangerous experiment, except the Crane; who, perſuaded by his ſolemn promiſes of a gratuity, ventured to thruſt her enormous length of neck down his throat, and having ſucceſsfully performed the operation, claimed the recompence. See the unreaſonableneſs of ſome creatures, ſaid the Wolf: have I not ſuffered thee ſafely to draw thy neck out of my jaws, and haſt thou the conſcience to demand a further reward!

FABLE XVIII.

The Countryman and the Snake.

AN honeſt Countryman obſerved a Snake lying under a hedge almoſt frozen to death. He was moved with compaſſion; and bringing it home, he laid it near the fire, and gave it ſome new milk. Thus fed and cheriſhed, the creature preſently began to revive: but no ſooner had he recovered ſtrength enough to do miſchief, than he ſprung upon the countryman's wife, bit one of his children, and, in ſhort, threw the whole family into confuſion and terror. Ungrateful wretch! ſaid the man, thou haſt ſufficiently taught me how ill-judged it is to confer benefits on the worthleſs and undeſerving. So ſaying, he ſnatched up an hatchet, and cut the Snake in pieces.

FABLE XIX.

The Dog and the Shadow.

AN hungry Spaniel, having ſtolen a piece of fleſh from a butcher's ſhop, was carrying it acroſs a river. The water being clear, and the ſun ſhining brightly, he ſaw his own image in the ſtream, and fancied it to be another Dog with a more delicious morſel: upon which, unjuſtly and greedily opening his jaws to ſnatch at the Shadow, he loſt the ſubſtance.

FABLE XX.

The Sun and the Wind.

PHŒBUS and Æolus had once a diſpute which of them could ſooneſt prevail with a certain traveller to part with his cloak. Æolus began the attack, and aſſaulted him with great violence. But the man wrapping his cloak ſtill cloſer about him, doubled his efforts to keep it, and went on his way. And now Phœbus darted his warm inſinuating rays, which melting the traveller by degrees, at length obliged him to throw aſide that cloak, which all the rage of Æolus could not compel him to reſign. Learn hence, ſaid Phœbus to the bluſtering god, that ſoft and gentle means will often accompliſh what force and fury can never effect.

FABLE XXI.

The Wolf and the Maſtiff.

A LEAN half-ſtarved Wolf inadvertently ſtrolled in the way of a ſtrong well-fed Maſtiff. The Wolf being much too weak to act upon the offenſive, thought it moſt prudent to accoſt honeſt Towſer in a friendly manner; and among other civilities, very complaiſantly congratulated him on his goodly appearance. Why, yes, returned the maſtiff, I am indeed in tolerable caſe; and if you will follow me, you may ſoon be altogether in as good a plight. The Wolf pricked up his ears at the propoſal, and requeſted to be informed what he muſt do to earn ſuch plentiful meals. Very little, replied the Maſtiff; only drive away beggars, careſs my maſter, and be civil to his family. To theſe conditions the hungry Wolf had no objection, and very readily conſented to follow his new acquaintance wherever he would conduct him. As

they were trotting along, the Wolf obſerved that the hair was worn in a circle round his friend's neck; which raiſed his curioſity to inquire what was the occaſion of it. Nothing, anſwered the Maſtiff, or a mere triſle; perhaps the collar to which my chain is ſometimes faſtened. Chain! replied the Wolf, with much ſurpriſe; it ſhould ſeem then that you are not permitted to rove about where and when you pleaſe. Not always, returned Towſer, hanging down his head; but what does that ſignify? It ſignifies ſo much, rejoined the Wolf, that I am reſolved to have no ſhare in your dinners; half a meal with liberty, is, in my eſtimation, preferable to a full one without it.

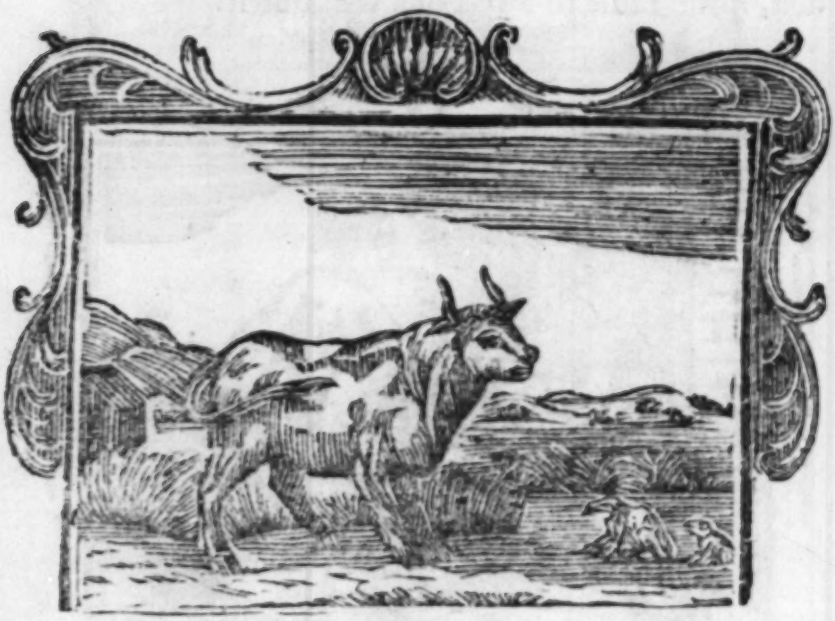
FABLE XXII.

Fortune and the School-Boy.

A SCHOOL-BOY, fatigued with play, threw himſelf down by the brink of a deep well, where he fell faſt aſleep. Fortune happening to

paſs by, ſaw him in this dangerous ſituation, and kindly gave him a tap on the ſhoulder: My dear child, ſaid ſhe, if you had fallen into this well, I ſhould have borne the blame; though in fact, the accident would have been wholly owing to your own careleſſneſs.

Misfortune, ſaid a celebrated cardinal, is but another word for imprudence. The maxim is by no means abſolutely true: certain, however, it is, that mankind ſuffer more evils from their own imprudence, than from events which it is not in their power to control.



FABLE XXIII.

The Frog and the Ox.

A FROG being wonderfully ſtruck with the ſize and majeſty of an Ox that was grazing in the marſhes, could not forbear endeavouring to

expand herſelf to the ſame portly magnitude. After puffing and ſwelling for ſome time, "What think you, ſiſter," ſaid ſhe, "will this do?" Far from it. "Will this?" by no means. "But this ſurely will?" Nothing like it. In ſhort, after many ridiculous efforts to the ſame fruitleſs purpoſe, the ſimple Frog burſt her ſkin, and miſerably expired upon the ſpot.

FABLE XXIV.

The Lion and other Beaſts hunting in Partnerſhip.

THE Bull and ſeveral other beaſts, were ambitious of the honour of hunting with the Lion. His ſavage majeſty graciouſly condeſcended to their deſire; and it was agreed, that they ſhould all have an equal ſhare in whatever might be taken. They ſcour the foreſt, are unanimous in the purſuit; and, after a very fine chaſe, pull down a noble Stag. It was divided with great dexterity by the

Bull, into four equal parts; but juſt as he was going to ſecure his ſhare—Hold, ſays the Lion, let no one preſume to ſerve himſelf, till he hath heard our juſt and reaſonable claims. I ſeize upon the firſt quarter by virtue of my prerogative; the ſecond, I think, is due to my ſuperior conduct and courage; I cannot forego the third on account of the neceſſities of my den; and if any one is inclined to diſpute my right to the fourth, let him ſpeak. Awed by the majeſty of his frown, and the terror of his paws, they ſilently withdrew, reſolving never to hunt again but with their equals.

FABLE XXV.

The Ant and the Fly.

AN Ant and a Fly had once a ridiculous conteſt about precedency, and were arguing which of the two was the more honourable: ſuch diſputes moſt frequently happen amongſt the loweſt and

moſt worthleſs creatures. The Fly expreſſed great reſentment, that ſuch a poor, crawling inſect, ſhould preſume to lie baſking in the ſame ſunſhine, with one ſo much her ſuperior! Thou haſt not ſurely the inſolence, ſaid ſhe, to imagine thyſelf of an equal rank with me. I am none of your mechanic creatures who live by their induſtry; but enjoy in plenty, and without labour, every thing that is truly delicious. I place myſelf uncontrolled upon the heads of kings; I kiſs with freedom the lips of beauties; and feaſt upon the choiceſt ſacrifices that are offered to the gods. To eat with the gods, replied the Ant, and to enjoy the favours of the fair and the powerful, would be great honour indeed to one who was an invited or a welcome gueſt; but an impertinent intruder, who is driven out with averſion and contempt wherever he appears, has not much cauſe methinks to boaſt of his privileges. And as to the honour of not labouring for your ſubſiſtence; here too your boaſt is only your diſgrace; for hence it is, that one half of the year you are deſtitute even of the common neceſſaries of life; whilſt I, at the ſame time, retiring to the hoarded granaries which my honeſt induſtry has filled, enjoy every ſatisfaction, independent of the favour either of beauties or of kings.

FABLE XXVI.

The Bear and the two Friends.

TWO Friends, ſetting out together upon a journey which led through a dangerous foreſt, mutually promiſed to aſſiſt each other, if they ſhould happen to be aſſaulted. They had not proceeded far, before they perceived a Bear making towards them with great rage. There were no hopes in flight: but one of them, being very active, ſprung up into a tree; upon which the other, throwing himſelf flat on the ground, held his breath, and pretended to be dead; remembering to have heard it aſſerted, that this creature will not prey upon a dead carcaſe. The Bear came up, and after ſmelling to him for ſome time, left him, and went on. When he was fairly out of ſight and hearing, the hero from the tree calls out—Well, my friend, what ſaid the Bear? He ſeemed to whiſper you very

cloſely. He did ſo, replied the other, and gave me this good piece of advice; never to aſſociate with a wretch, who in the hour of danger will deſert his friend.

FABLE XXVII.

The Bull and the Gnat.

A CONCEITED Gnat, fully perſuaded of his own importance, having placed himſelf on the horn of a Bull, expreſſed great uneaſineſs leſt his weight ſhould be incommodious: and with much ceremony begged the Bull's pardon for the liberty he had taken; aſſuring him that he would immediately remove, if he preſſed too hard upon him. Give yourſelf no uneaſineſs on that account, replied the Bull, I beſeech you: for as I never perceived when you ſat down, I ſhall probably not miſs you whenever you think fit to riſe up.

FABLE XXVIII.

The Waſps and the Bees.

PRETENDERS of every kind are beſt detected by appealing to their works.

Some honey-combs being claimed by a ſwarm of Waſps, the right owners proteſted againſt their demand, and the cauſe was referred to a Hornet. Witneſſes being examined, they depoſed that certain winged creatures, who had a loud hum, of a yellowiſh colour, and ſomewhat like Bees, were obſerved a conſiderable time hovering about the place where this neſt was found. But this did not ſufficiently decide the queſtion; for theſe characteriſtics, the Hornet obſerved, agreed no leſs with the Bees than with the Waſps. At length a ſenſible old Bee offered to put the matter upon this deciſive iſſue: Let a place be appointed by the court, ſaid he, for the plaintiffs and defendants

to work in : it will then ſoon appear which of us are capable of forming ſuch regular cells, and afterwards of filling them with ſo delicious a fluid. The Waſps, refuſing to agree to this propoſal, ſufficiently convinced the judge on which ſide the right lay: and he decreed the honey-combs accordingly.

FABLE XXIX.

The Old Man and Death.

A FEEBLE old Man, quite ſpent with carrying a burden of ſticks, which, with much labour, he had gathered in a neighbouring wood, called upon Death to releaſe him from the fatigues he endured. Death hearing the invocation, was immediately at his elbow, and aſked him what he wanted. Frighted and trembling at the unexpected appearance : O good ſir ! ſaid he, my burden

had like to have ſlipped from me, and being unable to recover it myſelf, I only implored your aſſiſtance to replace it on my ſhoulders.

FABLE XXX.

The Court and Country-Mouſe.

A CONTENTED Country-Mouſe had once the honour to receive a viſit from an old acquaintance belonging to the court The Country Mouſe, extremely glad to ſee her gueſt, very hoſpitably ſet before her the beſt heeſe and bacon which her cottage afforded; and as to their beverage, it was the pureſt water from the ſpring Th repaſt was homely indeed, but the welcome hearty they ſat and chatted away the evening together very agreeably, and then retired in peace and quietneſs each to her little cell. The next morning, when the gueſt was to take her leave, ſhe kindly preſſed her country

friend to accompany her; ſetting forth in very pompous terms, the great elegance and plenty in which ſhe lived at court. The Country-Mouſe was eaſily prevailed upon, and they ſet out together. It was late in the evening when they arrived at the palace; however, in one of the rooms, they found the remains of a ſumptuous entertainment. There were creams, and jellies, and ſweetmeats; and every thing, in ſhort, of the moſt delicate kind: the cheeſe was Parmeſan, and they whetted their whiſkers in exquiſite champaign. But before they had half finiſhed their repaſt, they were alarmed with the barking and ſcratching of a lap-dog; then the mewing of a cat frightened them almoſt to death; by and by, a whole train of ſervants burſt into the room, and every thing was ſwept away in an inſtant. Ah! my dear friend, ſaid the Country-Mouſe, as ſoon as ſhe had recovered courage enough to ſpeak, if your fine living is thus interrupted with fears and dangers, let me return to my plain food, and my peaceful cottage; for what is elegance without eaſe: or plenty with an aching heart?

FABLE XXXI.

The Fox and the Goat.

A FOX and a Goat travelling together, in a very ſultry day, found themſelves exceedingly thirſty; when looking round the country in order to diſcover a place where they might probably meet with water, they at length deſcried a clear ſpring at the bottom of a well. They both eagerly deſcended, and having ſufficiently allayed their thirſt, began to conſider how they ſhould get out. Many expedients for that purpoſe were mutually propoſed, and rejected. At laſt the crafty Fox cried out with great joy, I have a thought juſt ſtruck into my mind, which I am confident will extricate us out of our difficulty: do you, ſaid he to the Goat, only rear yourſelf up upon your hinder legs, and reſt your fore feet againſt the ſide of the well. In

this poſture, I will climb up to your head, from whence I ſhall be able, with a ſpring, to reach the top: and when I am once there, you are ſenſible it will be very eaſy for me to pull you out by the horns. The ſimple Goat liked the propoſal well; and immediately placed himſelf as directed: by means of which the Fox, without much difficulty, gained the top. And now, ſaid the Goat, give me the aſſiſtance you promiſed. Thou old fool, replied the Fox, hadſt thou but half as much brains as beard, thou wouldſt never have believed, that I would hazard my own life to ſave thine. However, I will leave with thee a piece of advice, which may be of ſervice to thee hereafter, if thou ſhouldſt have the good fortune to make thy eſcape: "Never venture into a well again, before thou haſt well conſidered how to get out of it."

FABLE XXXII.

The Farmer, the Cranes, and the Stork.

A STORK was unfortunately drawn into company with ſome Cranes, who were juſt ſetting out on a party of pleaſure, as they called it, which in truth was to rob the fiſh-ponds of a neighbouring Farmer. Our ſimple Stork agreed to make one; and it ſo happened, that they were all taken in the fact. The Cranes having been old offenders, had very little to ſay for themſelves, and were preſently diſpatched; but the Stork pleaded hard for his life. He urged that it was his firſt fault, that he was not naturally addicted to ſtealing fiſh, that he was famous for piety to his parents, and, in ſhort, for many other virtues. Your piety and virtue, ſaid the Farmer, may, for aught I know, be exemplary; but your being in company with thieves renders it very ſuſpicious; and you muſt therefore ſubmit with patience to ſhare the ſame puniſhment with your companions.

FABLE XXXIII.

The Oak and the Willow.

A CONCEITED Willow had once the vanity to challenge his mighty neighbour the Oak, to a trial of ſtrength. It was to be determined by the next ſtorm, and Æolus was addreſſed by both parties, to exert his moſt powerful efforts. This was no ſooner aſked than granted; and a violent hurricane aroſe: when the pliant Willow, bending from the blaſt, or ſhrinking under it, evaded all its force; while the generous Oak, diſdaining to give way, oppoſed its fury, and was torn up by the roots. Immediately the Willow began to exult, and to claim the victory; when thus the fallen Oak interrupted his exultation: Calleſt thou this a trial of ſtrength? Poor wretch! not to thy ſtrength, but weakneſs; not to thy boldly facing danger, but meanly ſkulking from it, thou oweſt thy preſent ſafety. I am an Oak, though fallen; thou ſtill a

Willow, though unhurt: but who, except ſo mean a wretch as thyſelf, would prefer an ignominious life, preſerved by craft or cowardice, to the glory of meeting death in an honourable cauſe.

FABLE XXXIV.

The Boy and the Filberts.

A CERTAIN Boy, as Epictetus tells the fable, put his hand into a pitcher, where great plenty of figs and filberts were depoſited; he graſped as many as his fiſt could poſſibly hold, but when he endeavoured to pull it out, the narrowneſs of the neck prevented him. Unwilling to loſe any of them, but unable to draw out his hand, he burſt into tears, and bitterly bemoaned his hard fortune. An honeſt fellow who ſtood by, gave him this wiſe and ſeaſonable advice:—Graſp only half the quantity, my Boy, and you will eaſily ſucceed.

FABLE XXXV.

The Satyr and the Traveller.

A POOR Man travelling in the depth of winter, through a dreary foreſt, no inn to receive him, no human creature to befriend or comfort him, was in danger of being ſtarved to death. At laſt, however, he came to the cave of a Satyr, where he intreated leave to reſt a while, and ſhelter himſelf from the inclemency of the weather. The Satyr very civilly complied with his requeſt. The Man had no ſooner entered, than he began to blow his fingers. His hoſt, ſurpriſed at the novelty of the action, was curious to know the meaning of it. I do it, ſaid the Traveller, to warm my frozen joints, which are benumbed with cold. Preſently afterwards, the Satyr having prepared a meſs of hot gruel to refreſh his gueſt, the Man found it neceſſary to blow his pottage too. What, inquired the Satyr, is not your gruel hot enough?

Yes, replied the Traveller, too hot; and I blow it to make it cooler. Do you ſo? quoth the Satyr, then get out of my cave as faſt as you can; for I deſire to have no communication with a creature that blows hot and cold with the ſame breath.

FABLE XXXVI.

The Horſe and the Stag.

BEFORE the uſe of Horſes was known in the world, one of thoſe noble animals, having been inſulted by a Stag, and finding himſelf unequal to his adverſary, applied to a man for aſſiſtance. The requeſt was eaſily granted, and the man putting a bridle in his mouth, and mounting upon his back, ſoon came up with the Stag, and laid him dead at his enemy's feet. The Horſe having thus gratified his revenge, thanked his auxiliary: And now will I

return in triumph, ſaid he, and reign the undiſputed lord of the foreſt. By no means, replied the man; I ſhall have occaſion for your ſervices, and you muſt go home with me. So ſaying, he led him to his hovel, where the unhappy Steed ſpent the remainder of his days in a laborious ſervitude; ſenſible too late, that how pleaſing ſoever revenge may appear, it always coſts more to a generous mind than the purchaſe is worth.

FABLE XXXVII.

The Farmer and his Sons.

A WEALTHY old Farmer, who had for ſome time declined in his health, perceiving that he had not many days to live, called his ſons together to his bedſide. My dear children, ſaid the dying man, I leave it with you as my laſt injunction, not to part with the farm which has been in our

family theſe hundred years: for, to diſcloſe to you a ſecret which I received from my father, and which I now think proper to communicate to you, there is a treaſure hid ſomewhere in the grounds; though I never could diſcover the particular ſpot where it lies concealed. However, as ſoon as the harveſt is got in, ſpare no pains in the ſearch, and I am well aſſured you will not loſe your labour. The wiſe old man was no ſooner laid in his grave, and the time he mentioned arrived, than his ſons went to work, and with great vigour and alacrity turned up again and again every foot of ground belonging to their farm; the conſequence of which was, although they did not find the object of their purſuit, that their lands yielded a far more plentiful crop than thoſe of their neighbours. At the end of the year, when they were ſettling their accounts, and computing their extraordinary profits, I would venture a wager, ſaid one of the brothers, more acute than the reſt, that this was the concealed wealth my father meant. I am ſure at leaſt, we have found by experience, that "Induſtry is itſelf a treaſure."

FABLE XXXVIII.

The Lion and the Gnat.

AVAUNT! thou paltry, contemptible inſect! ſaid a proud Lion one day to a Gnat that was friſking about in the air near his den. The Gnat, enraged at this unprovoked inſult, vowed revenge, and immediately darted into the Lion's ear. After having ſufficiently teazed him in that quarter, ſhe quitted her ſtation, and retired under his belly; and from thence made her laſt and moſt formidable attack in his noſtrils, where ſtinging him almoſt to madneſs, the Lion at length fell down, utterly ſpent with rage, vexation, and pain. The Gnat having thus abundantly gratified her reſentment, flew off in great exultation: but in the heedleſs tranſports of her ſucceſs, not ſufficiently attending to her own ſecurity; ſhe found herſelf unexpected-

ly entangled in the web of a ſpider; who, ruſhing out inſtantly upon her, put an end to her triumph and her life.

This fable inſtructs us, never to ſuffer ſucceſs ſo far to tranſport us, as to throw us off our guard againſt a reverſe of fortune.

FABLE XXXIX.

The Miſer and his Treaſure.

A MISER having ſcraped together a conſiderable ſum of money, by denying himſelf the common conveniences of life, was much embarraſſed where to lodge it moſt ſecurely. After many perplexing debates with himſelf, he at length fixed upon a corner in a retired field, where he depoſited his Treaſure, and with it his heart, in a hole, which he dug for that purpoſe. His mind was now for a moment at eaſe; but he had not pro-

ceeded many paces in his way home, when all his anxiety returned; and he could not forbear going back to ſee that every thing was ſafe. This he repeated again and again! till he was at laſt obſerved by a labourer who was mending a hedge in an adjacent meadow. The fellow concluding that ſomething extraordinary muſt be the occaſion of the frequent viſits marked the ſpot; and coming in the night in order to examine it, he diſcovered the prize, and bore it off unmoleſted. Early the next morning, the Miſer again renewed his viſit; when finding his treaſure gone, he broke out into the moſt bitter exclamations. A Traveller, who happened to be paſſing by at the ſame time, was moved by his complaints to enquire into the cauſe of them. Alas! replied the Miſer, I have ſuſtained the moſt cruel and irreparable loſs! ſome villain has robbed me of a ſum of money, which I buried under this ſtone no longer ago than yeſterday. Buried! returned the Traveller with ſurprize; a very extraordinary method truly of diſpoſing of your riches! Why did you not rather keep them in your houſe, that they might be ready for your daily occaſions? Daily occaſions! reſumed the Miſer, with an air of much indignation; do you imagine I ſo little know the value of money, as to ſuffer it to be run away with by occaſions? on the contrary, I had prudently reſolved not to touch a ſingle ſhilling of it. If that was your wiſe reſolution, anſwered the Traveller, I ſee no ſort of reaſon for your being thus afflicted; it is but putting this ſtone in the place of your Treaſure, and it will anſwer all your purpoſes full as well.

FABLE XL.

Minerva's Olive.

THE gods, ſay the heathen mythologiſts, have each of them their favourite tree. Jupiter preferred the oak, Venus the myrtle, and Phœbus the laurel; Cybele the pine, and Hercules the poplar. Minerva, ſurprized that they ſhould chooſe barren trees, aſked Jupiter the reaſon.—It is, ſaid he, to prevent any ſuſpicion that we confer the honour we do them, from an intereſted motive. Let folly ſuſpect what it pleaſes, returned Minerva; I ſhall not ſcruple to acknowledge, that I make choice of the Olive for the uſefulneſs of its fruits. O daughter, replied the father of the gods, it is with juſtice that men eſteem thee wiſe; for nothing is truly valuable that is not uſeful.

FABLE XLI.

The Mimic and the Countryman.

MEN often judge wrong from ſome fooliſh prejudice; and whilſt they perſiſt in the defence of their miſtakes, are ſometimes brought to ſhame by inconteſtible evidence.

A certain wealthy patrician, intending to treat the Roman people with ſome theatrical entertainments, publiſhed a reward to any one who could furniſh out a new or uncommon diverſion. Excited by emulation, the artiſts aſſembled from all parts; among whom, a Mimic, well known for his arch wit, gave out, that he had a kind of entertainment that had never yet been produced upon any ſtage.

This report being ſpread about, brought the whole city together. The theatre could hardly contain the number of ſpectators. And when the

artiſt appeared alone upon the ſtage, without any apparatus, without any prompter or aſſiſtant, curioſity and ſuſpenſe kept the ſpectators in a profound ſilence.

On a ſudden the performer thruſt down his head into his boſom, and mimiced the ſqueaking of a young pig ſo naturally, that the audience inſiſted upon it, he had one under his cloak, and ordered him to be ſearched. Which being done, and nothing appearing, they loaded the man with encomiums, and honoured him with the moſt extravagant applauſe.

A country fellow obſerving what paſt——— "Faith," ſays he, "I can do this better than he:" and immediately gave out that he would perform the ſame much better the next day. Accordingly, greater crowds aſſembled: prepoſſeſſed, however, in favour of the firſt artiſt, they ſit prepared to laugh at the Clown, rather than to judge fairly of his performance.

They both came out upon the ſtage. The Mimic grunts away firſt, is received with vaſt applauſe, and the loudeſt acclamations. Then the Countryman, pretending that he concealed a little pig under his clothes (which, in fact, he did) pinched the ear of the animal, till he made him ſqueak. The people exclaimed aloud that the firſt performer had imitated the pig much more naturally; and would have hiſſed the Countryman off the ſtage, but he produced the real pig from his boſom, and convincing them by a viſible proof of their ridiculous error; See, gentlemen, ſays he, What pretty ſort of Judges you are!

FABLE XLII.

The Dog and the Crocodile.

WE can never be too carefully guarded againſt a connection with perſons of an ill character.

As a Dog was courſing the banks of the Nile, he grew thirſty; but, fearing to be ſeized by the monſters of that river, he would not ſtop to ſatiate his drought, but lapped as he ran. A Crocodile raiſing his head above the ſurface of the water, aſked him, Why he was in ſuch a hurry? he had often, he ſaid, wiſhed for his acquaintance, and ſhould be glad to embrace the preſent opportunity. You do me great honour, returned the Dog, but it is to avoid ſuch companions as you that I am in ſo much haſte.

FABLE XLIII.

The Wolf in Diſguiſe.

DESIGNING hypocrites frequently lay themſelves open to diſcovery, by over-acting their parts.

A Wolf, who by frequent viſits to a flock of ſheep in his neighbourhood, began to be extremely well known to them, thought it expedient, for the more ſucceſsfully carrying on his depredations, to appear in a new character. To this end he diſguiſed himſelf in a ſhepherd's habit; and reſting his fore-feet upon a ſtick, which ſerved him by way of crook, he ſoftly made his approaches toward the fold. It happened that the ſhepherd and his dog were both of them extended on the graſs, faſt aſleep; ſo that he would certainly have ſucceeded in his project, if he had not imprudently attempted to imitate the ſhepherd's voice. The horrid noiſe awakened them

both: When the Wolf, encumbered with his diſguiſe, and finding it impoſſible either to reſiſt or to flee, yielded up his life an eaſy prey to the ſhepherd's dog.

FABLE XLIV.

The Bee and the Spider.

THE Bee and the Spider once entered into a warm debate which was the better artiſt. The Spider urged her ſkill in the mathematics, and aſſerted, that no one was half ſo well acquainted as herſelf with the conſtruction of lines, angles, ſquares, and circles: that the web ſhe daily wove was a ſpecimen of art inimitable by any other creature in the univerſe: and beſides, that her works were derived from herſelf alone, the product of her own bowels: whereas the boaſted honey of the Bee was ſtolen from every herb and

flower of the field; nay, that ſhe had obligations even to the meaneſt weeds. To this the Bee replied, that ſhe was in hopes the art of extracting honey from the meaneſt weeds would at leaſt have been allowed her as an excellence; and that as to her ſtealing ſweets from the herbs and flowers of the field, her ſkill was there ſo conſpicuous, that no flower ever ſuffered the leaſt dimunition of its fragrance from ſo delicate an operation. Then, as to the Spider's vaunted knowledge in the conſtruction of lines and angles, ſhe believed ſhe might ſafely reſt the merits of her cauſe on the regularity alone of her combs; but ſince ſhe could add to this, the ſweetneſs and excellence of her honey, and the various purpoſes to which her wax was employed, ſhe had nothing to fear from the compariſon of her ſkill with that of the weaver of a flimſy cobweb: for the value of every art, ſhe obſerved, is chiefly to be eſtimated by its uſe.

FABLE XLV.

The Aſs and his Maſter.

A DILIGENT Aſs, daily loaded beyond his ſtrength by a ſevere Maſter whom he had long ſerved, and who kept him at very ſhort commons, happened one day in his old age, to be oppreſſed with a more than ordinary burthen of earthen-ware. His ſtrength being much impaired, and the road deep and uneven, he unfortunately made a trip, and unable to recover himſelf, fell down and broke all the veſſels to pieces. His Maſter, tranſported with rage, began to beat him moſt unmercifully. Againſt whom the poor Aſs, lifting up his head as he lay on the ground, thus ſtrongly remonſtrated: Unfeeling wretch! to thy own avaricious cruelty, in firſt pinching me of food, and then loading me beyond my ſtrength, thou oweſt the misfortune which thou ſo unjuſtly imputeſt to me.

FABLE XLVI.

The Cock and the Fox.

AN experienced old Cock was ſettling himſelf to rooſt upon a high bough, when a Fox appeared under the tree. I am come, ſaid the artful hypocrite, to acquaint you in the name of all my brethren, that a general peace is concluded between your whole family and ours. Deſcend immediately, I beſeech you, that we may mutually embrace upon ſo joyful and unexpected an event. My good friend, replied the Cock, nothing could be more agreeable to me than this news: and to hear it from you increaſes my ſatisfaction. But I perceive two hounds at a diſtance coming this way, who are probably diſpatched as couriers with the treaty: as they run very ſwiftly, and will certainly be here in a few minutes, I will wait their arrival, that we may all four embrace together. Reynard well knew if that was the caſe, it was no time for

him to remain there any longer: pretending therefore to be in great haſte; Adieu, ſaid he, for the preſent; we will reſerve our rejoicings to another opportunity: upon which he darted into the woods with all imaginable expedition. Old Chanticleer no ſooner ſaw him depart, than he crowed abundantly in the triumph of his artifice: for by a harmleſs ſtratagem to diſappoint the malevolent intentions of thoſe who are endeavouring to deceive us to our ruin, is not only innocent but laudable.

FABLE XLVII.

The Eagle and the Crow.

TO miſtake our own talents, or over-rate our abilities, is always ridiculous, and ſometimes dangerous.

An Eagle, from the top of a high mountain,

making a ſtoop at a lamb, pounced it, and bore it away to her young. A Crow, who had built her neſt in a cedar near the foot of the rock, obſerving what paſſed, was ambitious of performing the ſame exploit; and darting from her neſt, fixed her talons in the fleece of another lamb. But neither able to move her prey, nor to diſentangle her feet, ſhe was taken by the ſhepherd, and carried away for his children to play with; who eagerly enquiring what bird it was,—An hour ago, ſaid he, ſhe fancied herſelf an Eagle; however, I ſuppoſe ſhe is by this time convinced that ſhe is but a Crow.

FABLE XLVIII.

The Farmer and the Stag.

A STAG, who had left at ſome diſtance a pack of hounds, came up to a Farmer, and deſired he would ſuffer him to hide himſelf in a little coppice which joined to his houſe. The Farmer, on

condition that he would forbear to enter a field of wheat, which lay before him, and was now ready for the ſickle, immediately gave him leave, and promiſed not to betray him. The 'ſquire with his train inſtantly appeared, and enquiring whether he had not ſeen the Stag? No, ſaid the Farmer, he has not paſſed this way, I aſſure you: but, in order to curry favour at the ſame time with his worſhip, he pointed ſlily with his finger to the place where the poor beaſt lay concealed. This, however, the ſportſman, intent on his game, did not obſerve, but paſſed on with his dogs acroſs the very field. As ſoon as the Stag perceived they were gone, he prepared to ſteal off, without ſpeaking a word. Methinks, cried the Farmer, you might thank me, at leaſt, for the refuge I have afforded you: Yes, ſaid the Stag, and had your hands been as honeſt as your tongue, I certainly ſhould; but all the return that a double-dealer has to expect, is a juſt indignation and contempt.

FABLE XLIX.

The Lion, the Tiger, and the Fox.

A LION and a Tiger jointly ſeized on a young fawn, which they immediately killed. This they had no ſooner performed, than they fell a fighting, in order to decide whoſe property it ſhould be. The battle was ſo bloody, and ſo obſtinate, that they were both compelled, through wearineſs and loſs of blood, to deſiſt; and lay down by mutual conſent, totally diſabled. At this inſtant, a Fox unluckily came by; who, perceiving their ſituation, made bold to ſeize the conteſted prey, and bore it off unmoleſted. As ſoon as the Lion could recover breath—How fooliſh, ſaid he, has been our conduct! Inſtead of being contented as we ought, with our reſpective ſhares; our ſenſeleſs rage has rendered us unable to prevent this raſcally Fox from defrauding us of the whole.

FABLE L.

The Lion and the Aſs.

A CONCEITED Aſs had once the impertinence to bray forth ſome contemptuous ſpeeches againſt the Lion. The ſuddenneſs of the inſult at firſt raiſed ſome emotions of wrath in his breaſt; but turning his head, and perceiving from whence it came, they immediately ſubſided; and he very ſedately walked on, without deigning to honour the contemptible creature even ſo much as with an angry word.

FABLE LI.

The Snake and the Hedge-Hog.

IT is by no means prudent to join intereſts with ſuch as have it in their power to impoſe upon us their own conditions.

By the intreaties of a Hedge-hog, half ſtarved with cold, a Snake was once perſuaded to receive him to her cell. He was no ſooner entered than his prickles began to be very uneaſy to his companion: upon which, the Snake deſired he would provide himſelf another lodging, as ſhe found, upon trial, the apartment was not large enough to accommodate both. Nay, ſaid the Hedge-hog, let them that are uneaſy in their ſituation exchange it; for my own part, I am very well contented where I am; if you are not, you are welcome to remove whenever you think proper.

FABLE LII.

The Trumpeter.

A TRUMPETER in a certain army happened to be taken priſoner. He was ordered immediately to execution, but pleaded in excuſe for himſelf, that it was unjuſt a perſon ſhould ſuffer death, who, far from an intention of miſchief, did not even wear an offenſive weapon. So much the rather, replied one of the enemy, ſhalt thou die; ſince without any deſign of fighting thyſelf, thou exciteſt others to the bloody buſineſs: for he that is the abettor of a bad action, is at leaſt equally guilty with him that commits it.

FABLE LIII.

* Vice and Fortune.

FORTUNE and Vice, according to Plutarch, had once a violent conteſt, which of them had it moſt in their power to make mankind unhappy. Fortune boaſted that ſhe could take from men every external good, and bring upon them every external evil. Be it ſo, replied Vice; but this is by no means ſufficient to make them miſerable without my aſſiſtance: whereas without yours, I am able to render them completely ſo; nay, in ſpite too of all your endeavours to make them happy.

* This Fable is abridged from Plutarch, by Lord Bolingbroke, in his Philoſophical Tracts.

FABLE LIV.

The Bear and the Bees.

A BEAR happened to be ſtung by a Bee; and the pain was ſo acute, that in the madneſs of revenge he ran into the garden, and overturned the hive. This outrage provoked their anger to a high degree, and brought the fury of the whole ſwarm upon him. They attacked him with ſuch violence, that his life was in danger; and it was with the utmoſt difficulty that he made his eſcape, wounded from head to tail. In this deſperate condition, lamenting his misfortunes, and licking his ſores, he could not forbear reflecting how much more adviſeable it had been to have patiently acquieſced under one injury, than thus by an unprofitable reſentment to have provoked a thouſand.

FABLES.

BOOK II.

FROM THE MODERNS.

FABLES.

BOOK IX.

FROM THE MODERNS.

FABLE I.

The Miller, his Son, and their Aſs.

A MILLER and his Son were driving their Aſs to market, in order to ſell him: and that he might get thither freſh, and in good condition, they drove him on gently before them. They had not proceeded far, when they met a company of travellers. Sure, ſay they, you are mighty careful of your Aſs; methinks, one of you might as well get up and ride, as ſuffer him to walk on at his eaſe, while you trudge after on foot. In compliance with this advice, the old Man ſet his Son upon the beaſt. And now, they had ſcarce advanced a quarter of a mile further, before they met another company. You idle young rogue, ſaid one of the party, why don't you get down, and let your poor Father ride? Upon this, the old Man made his Son diſmount, and got up himſelf. While they were marching in this manner, a third company

began to inſult the Father. You hard-hearted unnatural wretch, ſay they, how can you ſuffer that poor lad to wade through the dirt, while you, like an alderman, ride at your eaſe? The good-natured man ſtood corrected, and immediately took his ſon up behind him. And now the next man they met exclaimed with more vehemence and indignation than all the reſt—Was there ever ſuch a couple of lazy boobies! to overload in ſo unconſcionable a manner, a poor dumb creature, who is far leſs able to carry them than they are to carry him! The complying old Man would have been half inclined to make the trial, had not experience by this time ſufficiently convinced him, that there cannot be a more fruitleſs attempt, than to endeavour to pleaſe all mankind.

FABLE II.

The Sorcereſs.

NIGHT and ſilence had now given repoſe to the whole world, when an old ill-natured Sorcereſs, in order to exerciſe her infernal arts, entered into a gloomy wood, that trembled at her approach. The ſcene of her horrid incantations was within the circumference of a large circle; in the centre of which an altar was raiſed, where the hallowed vervain blazed in triangular flames, while the miſchievous Hag pronounced the dreadful words, which bound all hell in obedience to her charms. She blows a raging peſtilence from her lips into the neighbouring folds; the innocent cattle die, to afford a fit ſacrifice to the infernal deities. The moon, by powerful ſpells drawn down from her orb, enters the wood: legions of ſpirits from Pluto's realms appear before the altar, and demand her pleaſure. Tell me, ſaid ſhe, where I ſhall find what

I have loſt, my favourite little Dog. How !—— cried they all, enraged—Impertinent Beldame !—— muſt the order of nature be inverted, and the repoſe of every creature diſturbed, for the ſake of thy little Dog?

FABLE III.

The Cameleon.

TWO travellers happened on their journey to be engaged in a warm diſpute about the colour of the Cameleon One of them affirmed, it was blue ; that he had ſeen it with his own eyes, upon the naked branch of a tree, feeding on the air, in a very clear day. The other ſtrongly aſſerted it was green, and that he had viewed it very cloſely and minutely on the broad leaf of a fig-tree Both of them were poſitive, and the diſpute was riſing to a quarrel : but a third perſon luckily coming by, they agreed to refer the queſtion to

his deciſion. Gentlemen, ſaid the arbitrator, with a ſmile of great ſelf-ſatisfaction, you could not have been more lucky in your reference, as I happened to have caught one of them laſt night: but indeed you are both miſtaken, for the creature is totally black. Black! Impoſſible! Nay, quoth the umpire with great aſſurance, the matter may ſoon be decided, for I immediately incloſed my Cameleon in a little paper box, and here it is. So ſaying, he drew it out of his pocket, opened his box, and behold it was as white as ſnow. The poſitive diſputants looked equally ſurpriſed, and equally confounded: while the ſagacious reptile, aſſuming the air of a philoſopher, thus admoniſhed them: Ye children of men, learn diffidence and moderation in your opinions. 'Tis true, you happen, in the preſent inſtance, to be all in the right, and have only conſidered the ſubject under different circumſtances: but pray, for the future, allow others to have eye-ſight as well as yourſelves; and be candid enough not to condemn any man for judging of things as they appear to his own view.

FABLE IV.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

A FLOCK of Sheep were feeding in a meadow, while their Dogs were aſleep, and their Shepherd at a diſtance playing on his pipe beneath the ſhade of a ſpreading elm. A young inexperienced Lamb obſerving a half-ſtarved Wolf peeping through the pales of the incloſure, entered into converſation with him. Pray what are you ſeeking for here? ſaid the Lamb. I am looking, replied the Wolf, for ſome tender graſs; for nothing you know is more pleaſant than to feed in a freſh paſture, and to ſlake one's thirſt at a cryſtal ſtream: both which I perceive you enjoy within theſe pales in their utmoſt perfection. Happy creature! continued he, how much I envy your lot! who are in full poſſeſſion of the utmoſt I deſire: for philoſophy has long taught me to be ſatisfied with a little. It ſeems then, returned the Lamb, thoſe who ſay you feed

on fleſh, accuſe you falſely, ſince a little graſs will eaſily content you. If this be true, let us for the future live like brethren, and feed together. So ſaying, the ſimple Lamb imprudently crept through the fence, and became at once a prey to our pretended philoſopher, and a ſacrifice to his own inexperience and credulity.

FABLE V.

The Fox and the Bramble.

A FOX, cloſely purſued by a pack of Dogs, took ſhelter under the covert of a Bramble. He rejoiced in his aſylum; and, for a while, was very happy: but ſoon found, that if he attempted to ſtir, he was wounded by thorns and prickles on every ſide. However, making a virtue of neceſſity, he forbore to complain; and comforted himſelf with reflecting, that no bliſs is perfect; that good and evil are mixed, and flow from the ſame

fountain. Theſe Briars indeed, ſaid he, will tear my ſkin a little, yet they keep off the Dogs. For the ſake of the good then, let me bear the evil with patience: Each bitter has its ſweet; and theſe Brambles, though they wound my fleſh, preſerve my life from danger.

FABLE VI.

The Falcon and the Hen.

DIFFERENT circumſtances make the ſame action right or wrong, a virtue or a vice. Of all the creatures I ever knew, ſaid a Falcon to a Hen, you are certainly the moſt ungrateful. What inſtance of ingratitude, replied the Hen, can you juſtly charge upon me? The greateſt, returned the Falcon; ingratitude to your higheſt benefactors, Men. Do they not feed you every day, and ſhelter you every night? Nevertheleſs, when they endeavour to court you to them, you ungratefully forget all

their kindneſs, and fly from them as from an enemy. Now I, who am wild by nature, and no way obliged to them; yet upon the leaſt of their careſſes, I ſuffer myſelf to be taken, and go, or come, at their command. All this is very true, replied the Hen, but there may be a ſufficient reaſon both for my fear, and your familiarity. I believe you never ſaw a ſingle Falcon roaſting at the fire; whereas I have ſeen a hundred Hens truſſed for that purpoſe.

FABLE VII.

The Travellers and the Money Bag.

AS two men were travelling on the road, one of them eſpied a Bag of Money lying on the ground, and picking it up, I am in luck this morning, ſaid he, I have found a Bag of Money. Yes, returned the other; though, methinks you ſhould

not ſay *I*, but *We* have found it: for when two friends are travelling together, they ought equally to ſhare in any accidental good fortune that may happen to attend them. No, rejoined the former, it was I that found it, and I muſt inſiſt upon keeping it He had no ſooner ſpoken the words, than they were alarmed with a hue and cry after a thief, who had that morning taken a purſe upon the road. Lord, ſaid the finder, this is extremely unfortunate; we ſhall certainly be ſeized. Good Sir, replied the other, be pleaſed not to ſay *We*, but *I:* as you would not allow me a ſhare in the prize, you have no right to make me a partner in the puniſhment.

FABLE VIII.

The diſcontented Aſs.

IN the depth of winter a poor Aſs prayed heartily for the ſpring, that he might exchange a cold lodging, and a heartleſs truſs of ſtraw, for a little

warm weather and a mouthful of freſh graſs. In a ſhort time, according to his wiſh, the warm weather and the freſh graſs came on; but brought with them ſo much toil and buſineſs, that he was ſoon as weary of the ſpring as before of the winter; and he now became impatient for the approach of ſummer. Summer arrives: but the heat, the harveſt work, and other drudgeries and inconveniences of the ſeaſon, ſet him as far from happineſs as before; which he now flattered himſelf would be found in the plenty of autumn. But here too he is diſappointed; for what with the carrying of apples, roots, fuel for the winter, and other proviſions, he was in autumn more fatigued than ever. Having thus trod round the circle of the year, in a courſe of reſtleſs labour, uneaſineſs, and diſappointment, and found no ſeaſon, nor ſtation of life, without its buſineſs and its trouble, he was forced at laſt to acquieſce in the comfortleſs ſeaſon of winter, where his complaint began: convinced that in this world every ſituation has its inconvenience.

FABLE IX.

The two Springs.

TWO Springs, which iſſued from the ſame mountain, began their courſe together: one of them took her way in a ſilent and gentle ſtream, while the other ruſhed along with a ſounding and rapid current. Siſter, ſaid the latter, at the rate you move, you will probably be dried up before you advance much farther: whereas, for myſelf, I will venture a wager, that within two or three hundred furlongs I ſhall become navigable, and after diſtributing commerce and wealth wherever I flow, I ſhall majeſtically proceed to pay my tribute to the ocean: ſo farewel, dear ſiſter, and patiently ſubmit to your fate. Her ſiſter made no reply; but calmly deſcending to the meadows below, increaſed her ſtream by numberleſs little rills, which ſhe collected in her progreſs, till at length ſhe was enabled to riſe into a conſiderable river:

whilſt the proud Stream, who had the vanity to depend ſolely upon her own ſufficiency, continued a ſhallow brook, and was glad at laſt to be helped forward, by throwing herſelf into the arms of her deſpiſed ſiſter.

FABLE X.

The Roſe and the Butterfly.

A FINE powdered Butterfly fell in love with a beautiful Roſe, who expanded her charms in a neighbouring parterre. Matters were ſoon adjuſted between them, and they mutually vowed eternal fidelity. The Butterfly, perfectly ſatisfied with the ſucceſs of his amour, took a tender leave of his miſtreſs, and did not return again till noon. What! ſaid the Roſe, when ſhe ſaw him approaching, is the ardent paſſion you vowed, ſo ſoon extinguiſhed? It is an age ſince you paid me a viſit. But no wonder: for I obſerved you courting by

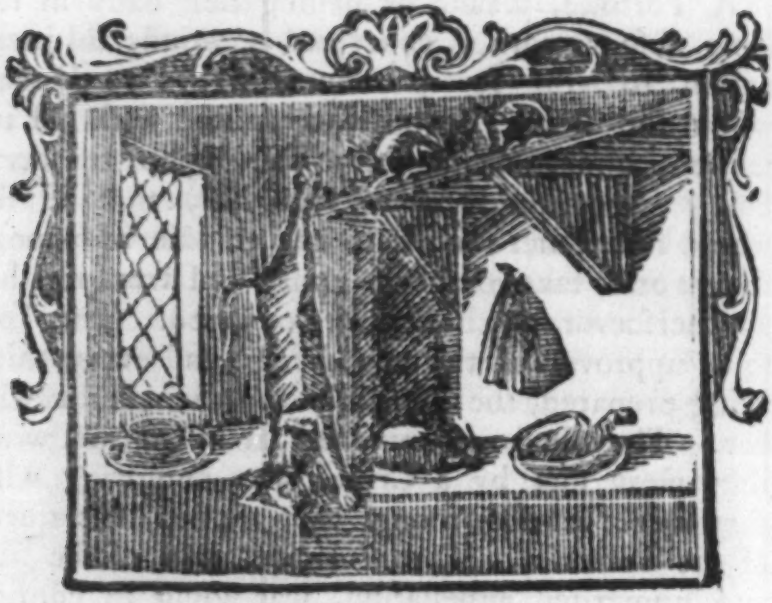
turns every flower in the garden. You little coquette, replied the Butterfly, it well becomes You truly, to reproach me with my gallantries; when in fact I only copy the example which you yourself have set me. For, not to mention the satisfaction with which you admitted the kisses of the fragrant Zephyr, did I not see you displaying your charms to the Bee, the Fly, the Wasp, and, in short, encouraging and receiving the addresses of every buzzing insect that fluttered within your view? If you will be a coquette, you must expect to find me inconstant.

FABLE XI.

The Tortoise and the two Ducks.

VANITY and idle curiosity are qualities which generally prove destructive to those who suffer themselves to be governed by them.

A Tortoiſe, weary of paſſing her days in the ſame obſcure corner, conceived a wonderful inclination to viſit foreign countries. Two Ducks, whom the ſimple Tortoiſe acquainted with her intention, undertook to oblige her, upon the occaſion. Accordingly they told her, that if ſhe would faſten her mouth to the middle of a pole, they would take the two ends, and tranſport her whitherſoever ſhe choſe to be conveyed. The Tortoiſe approved of the expedient; and every thing being prepared, the Ducks began their flight with her. They had not travelled far in the air, when they were met by a Crow, who enquiring what they were bearing along, they replied, the queen of the Tortoiſes. The Tortoiſe, vain of the new and unmerited appellation, was going to confirm the title, when opening her mouth for that purpoſe, ſhe let go her hold, and was daſhed to pieces by her fall.



FABLE XII.

The Cat and the old Rat.

A CERTAIN Cat had made ſuch unmerciful havock among the vermin of her neighbourhood, that not a ſingle Rat or Mouſe dared venture to appear abroad. Puſs was ſoon convinced, that if affairs remained in their preſent ſituation, ſhe muſt be totally unſupplied with proviſion. After mature deliberation, therefore, ſhe reſolved to have recourſe to ſtratagem. For this purpoſe, ſhe ſuſpended herſelf from a hook with her head downwards, pretending to be dead. The Rats and Mice obſerving her, as they peeped from their holes, in this dangling attitude, concluded ſhe was hanged for ſome miſdemeanour; and with great joy immediately ſallied forth in queſt of their prey. Puſs, as ſoon as a ſufficient number were collected together, quitting her hold, dropped into the midſt of them; and very few had the fortune to make good

their retreat. This artifice having ſucceeded ſo well, ſhe was encouraged to try the event of a ſecond. Accordingly ſhe whitened her coat all over, by rolling herſelf in a heap of flour, and in this diſguiſe lay concealed in the bottom of a meal-tub. This ſtratagem was executed in general with the ſame effect as the former. But an old experienced Rat, altogether as cunning as his adverſary, was not ſo eaſily enſnared. I don't much like, ſaid he, that white heap yonder; ſomething whiſpers me, there is miſchief concealed under it. 'Tis true, it may be meal; but it may likewiſe be ſomething that I ſhall not reliſh quite ſo well. There can be no harm, at leaſt, in keeping at a proper diſtance: for caution, I am ſure, is the parent of ſecurity.

FABLE XIII.

The Country-Maid and her Milk-Pail.

WHEN men ſuffer their imagination to amuſe them with the proſpect of diſtant and uncertain improvements of their condition; they frequently ſuſtain real loſſes, by their inattention to thoſe affairs in which they are immediately concerned.

A Country Maid was walking very deliberately with a Pail of Milk upon her head, when ſhe fell into the following train of reflections: The money, for which I ſhall ſell this milk, will enable me to increaſe my ſtock of eggs to three hundred. Theſe eggs, allowing for what may prove addle, and what may be deſtroyed by vermin, will produce at leaſt two hundred and fifty chickens. The chickens will be fit to carry to market about Chriſtmas, when poultry always bears a good price; ſo that by May-

day I cannot fail of having money enough to purchaſe a new gown. Green—let me conſider—yes, green becomes my complexion beſt, and green it ſhall be. In this dreſs I will go to the fair, where all the young fellows will ſtrive to have me for a partner: but I ſhall perhaps refuſe every one of them, and with an air of diſdain toſs from them. ——Tranſported with this triumphant thought, ſhe could not forbear acting with her head what thus paſſed in her imagination, when down came the Pail of Milk, and with it all her imaginary happineſs.

FABLE XIV.

The Cormorant and the Fiſhes.

IT is very imprudent to truſt an enemy, or even a ſtranger, ſo far as to put one's ſelf in his power.

A Cormorant, whoſe eyes were become ſo dim by age, that he could not diſcern his prey at the bottom of the waters, bethought himſelf of a ſtratagem to ſupply his wants. Hark you friend, ſaid he to a Gudgeon, whom he obſerved ſwimming near the ſurface of a certain canal, if you have any regard for yourſelf, or your brethren, go this moment and acquaint them from me, that the owner of this piece of water is determined to drag it a week hence. The Gudgeon immediately ſwam away, and made his report of this terrible news to a general aſſembly of the fiſhes, who unanimouſly agreed to ſend him back as their ambaſſador to the Cormorant. The purport of his commiſſion was to return him their thanks for the intelligence; and to add to their intreaties, that as he had been ſo good as to inform them of their danger, he would be graciouſly pleaſed to put them into a method of eſcaping it. That I will moſt readily, returned the artful Cormorant, and aſſiſt you with my beſt ſervices into the bargain. You have only to collect yourſelves together at the top of the water, and I will undertake to tranſport you one by one to my own reſidence, by the ſide of a ſolitary pool, to which no creature but myſelf ever found the way. The project was perfectly approved by the unwary fiſhes, and with great expedition performed by the deceitful Cormorant; who having placed them in a ſhallow water, the bottom of which his eye could eaſily diſcern, they were all devoured by him in their turns, as his hunger or luxury required.

FABLE XV.

The Atheiſt and the Acorn.

IT was the fool who ſaid in his heart, There is no God: into the breaſt of a wiſe man ſuch a thought could never have entered. One of thoſe refined reaſoners, commonly called Minute Philoſophers, was ſitting at his eaſe beneath the ſhade of a large oak, while at his ſide the weak branches of a pumpion trailed upon the ground. This threw our great logician into his old track of reaſoning againſt Providence. Is it conſiſtent with common ſenſe, ſaid he, that infinite wiſdom ſhould create a large and ſtately tree, with branches of prodigious ſtrength, only to bear ſo ſmall and inſignificant a fruit as an Acorn? Or that ſo weak a ſtem, as that of a pumpion, ſhould be ſo loaded with ſo diſproportionate a weight? A child may ſee the abſurdity of it. In the midſt of this curious ſpeculation, down dropt an Acorn, from

one of the higheſt branches of the oak, full upon his head. How ſmall a trifle may overturn the ſyſtems of mighty philoſophers! Struck with the accident he could not help crying out, How providential it is that this was not a pumpion!

FABLE XVI.

The Lynx and the Mole.

UNDER the covert of a thick wood, at the foot of a tree, as a Lynx lay whetting his teeth and waiting for his prey, he eſpied a Mole, half buried under a hillock of her own raiſing. Alas, poor creature, ſaid the Lynx, how much I pity thee! Surely Jupiter has been very unkind, to debar thee from the light of the day, which rejoices the whole creation. Thou art certainly not above half alive; and it would be doing thee a ſervice to put an end to ſo inanimate a being. I thank you for your kindneſs, replied the Mole, but I think I have full

as much vivacity as my ſtate and circumſtances require. For the reſt, I am perfectly well contented with the faculties which Jupiter has allotted me, who I am ſure wants not our direction in diſtributing his gifts with propriety. I have not, 'tis true, your piercing eyes; but I have ears which anſwer all my purpoſes equally as well. Hark! for example, I am warned, by a noiſe which I hear behind you, to fly from danger. So ſaying, he ſlunk into the earth; while a javelin from the arm of an Hunter pierced the quick-ſighted Lynx to the heart.

FABLE XVII.

The Spider and the Silk-worm.

HOW vainly we promiſe ourſelves, that our flimſy productions will be rewarded with immortal honour! A Spider, buſied in ſpreading his web from one ſide of a room to the other, was aſked

by an induſtrious Silk-worm, to what end he ſpent ſo much time and labour in making ſuch a number of lines and circles? The Spider angrily replied, Do not diſturb me, thou ignorant thing: I tranſmit my ingenuity to poſterity, and fame is the object of my wiſhes. Juſt as he had ſpoken, a chambermaid, coming into the room to feed her Silk-worms, ſaw the Spider at his work, and with one ſtroke of her broom, ſwept him away, and deſtroyed at once his labours, and his hopes of fame.

FABLE XVIII.

The Bee and the Fly.

A BEE obſerving a Fly friſking about her hive aſked him, in a very paſſionate tone, what he did there? Is it for ſuch ſcoundrels as you, ſaid ſhe, to intrude into the company of the queens of the air? You have great reaſon, truly, replied the Fly, to be out of humour: I am ſure they muſt be mad, who would have any concern with

ſo quarrelſome a nation. And why ſo? thou ſaucy malapert, returned the enraged Bee; we have the beſt laws, and are governed by the beſt policy in the world We feed upon the moſt fragrant flowers, and all our buſineſs is to make honey: honey, which equals nectar, thou taſteleſs wretch, who liveſt upon nothing but putrefaction and excrement. We live as we can, rejoined the Fly: poverty, I hope, is no crime; but paſſion is one, I am ſure. The honey you make is ſweet, I grant you; but your heart is all bitterneſs: for to be revenged on an enemy, you will deſtroy your own life; and are ſo inconſiderate in your rage, as to do more miſchief to yourſelves than to your adverſary. Take my word for it, one had better have leſs conſiderable talents, and uſe them with more diſcretion.

FABLE XIX.

Genius, Virtue, and Reputation.

GENIUS, Virtue, and Reputation, three intimate friends, agreed to travel over the iſland of Great-Britain, to ſee whatever might be worthy of obſervation. But as ſome misfortune, ſaid they, may happen to ſeparate us, let us conſider before we ſet out, by what means we may find each other again. Should it be my ill fate, ſaid Genius, to be ſevered from you, my aſſociates, which Heaven forbid! you may find me kneeling in devotion before the tomb of Shakſpeare; or rapt in ſome grove where Milton talked with angels; or muſing in the grotto where Pope caught inſpiration. Virtue, with a ſigh, acknowledged that her friends were not very numerous: but were I to loſe you, ſhe cried, with whom I am at preſent ſo happily united, I ſhould chooſe to take ſanctuary in the temples of religion, in the palaces of royalty, or in the ſtately domes of

miniſters of ſtate: but as it may be my ill fortune to be there denied admittance, enquire for ſome cottage where contentment has a bower, and there you will certainly find me. Ah, my dear companions, ſaid Reputation very earneſtly, you, I perceive, when miſſing may poſſibly be recovered; but take care, I intreat you, always to keep ſight of me, for if I am once loſt, I am never to be retrieved.

FABLE XX.

The Court of Death.

DEATH, the king of terrors, was determined to chooſe a prime miniſter; and his pale courtiers, the ghaſtly train of diſeaſes, were all ſummoned to attend: when each preferred his claim to the honour of this illuſtrious office. Fever urged the numbers he deſtroyed; cold palſy ſet forth his pretenſions, by ſhaking all his limbs; and dropſy, by

his ſwelled unwieldy carcaſe. Gout hobbled up, and alledged his great power in racking every joint; and aſthma's inability to ſpeak, was a ſtrong, though ſilent, argument in favour of his claim. Stone and colic pleaded their violence; plague, his rapid progreſs in deſtruction; and conſumption, though ſlow, inſiſted that he was ſure. In the midſt of this contention, the court was diſturbed with the noiſe of muſic, dancing, feaſting, and revelry; when immediately entered a lady, with a bold laſcivious air, and a fluſhed and jovial countenance: ſhe was attended on one hand by a troop of cooks and bacchanals; and on the other, by a train of wanton youths and damſels, who danced half naked to the ſofteſt muſical inſtruments: her name was Intemperance. She waved her hand, and thus addreſſed the croud of diſeaſes: Give way, ye ſickly band of pretenders, nor dare to vie with my ſuperior merits in the ſervice of this great Monarch. Am not I your parent? the author of your beings? Do ye not derive your power of ſhortening human life almoſt wholly from me? Who then ſo fit as myſelf for this important office? The griſly Monarch grinned a ſmile of approbation, placed her at his right hand, and ſhe immediately became his prime favourite, and principal miniſter.

FABLE XXI.

Induſtry and Sloth.

HOW many live in the world as uſeleſs as if they had never been born! they paſs through life like a bird through the air, and leave no track behind them; waſte the prime of their days in deliberating what they ſhall do; and bring them to a period, without coming to any determination.

An indolent young man being aſked why he lay in bed ſo long, jocoſely and careleſsly anſwered ——Every morning of my life I am hearing cauſes. I have two fine girls, their names are Induſtry and Sloth, cloſe at my bedſide, as ſoon as ever I awake, preſſing their different ſuits. One intreats me to get up, the other perſuades me to lie ſtill: and then they alternately give me various reaſons, why I ſhould riſe, and why I ſhould not. This detains

me ſo long, as it is the duty of an impartial judge to hear all that can be ſaid on either ſide, that before the pleadings are over, it is time to go to dinner.

FABLE XXII.

The Hare's Ears.

AN elk having accidentally gored a lion, the monarch was ſo exaſperated, that he ſent forth an edict, commanding all horned beaſts, on pain of death, to depart his dominions. A Hare, obſerving the ſhadow of her Ears, was much alarmed at their long and lofty appearance; and running to one of her friends, acquainted him, that ſhe was reſolved to quit the country: for ſhould I happen, ſaid ſhe, however undeſignedly, to give offence to my ſuperiors, my Ears may be conſtrued to come within the horn-act. Her friend ſmiled at her apprehenſions; and aſked, how it was poſſible that

Ears could be miſtaken for horns? Had I no more Ears than an oſtrich, replied the Hare, I would not truſt them in the hands of an informer; for truth and innocence are arguments of little force, againſt the logic of power and malice in conjunction.

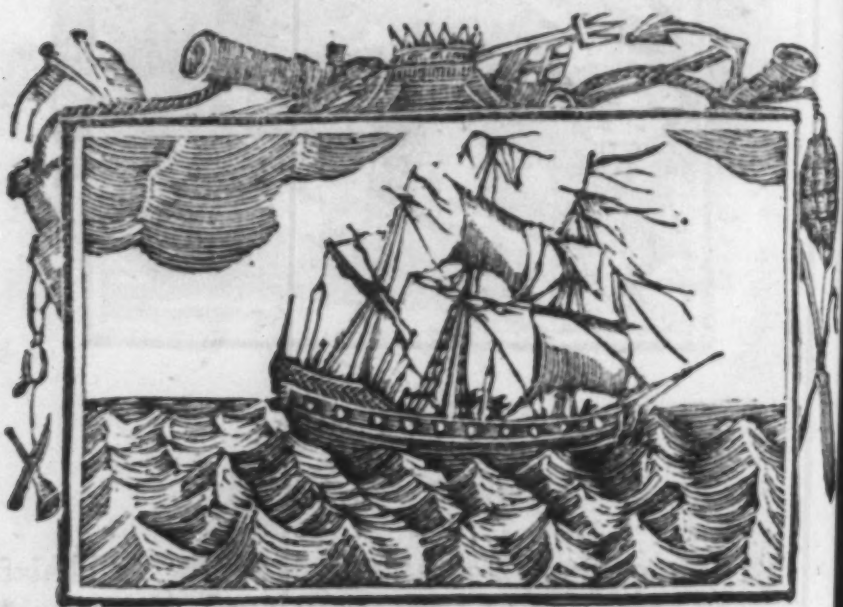
FABLE XXIII.

The Hermit and the Bear.

AN imprudent friend often does as much miſchief by his too great zeal, as the worſt enemy could effect by his malice.

A certain Hermit having done a good office to a Bear, the grateful creature was ſo ſenſible of his obligation, that he begged to be admitted as the guardian and companion of his ſolitude. The Hermit willingly accepted his offer, and conducted him to his cell; where they paſſed their time to-

gether in an amicable manner. One very hot day, the Hermit having laid him down to ſleep, the officious Bear employed himſelf in driving away the flies from his patron's face. But in ſpite of all his care, one of the flies perpetually returned to the attack, and at laſt ſettled upon the Hermit's noſe. Now I ſhall have you moſt certainly, ſaid the Bear; and, with the beſt intentions imaginable, gave him a violent blow on the face; which very effectually indeed demoliſhed the fly, but at the ſame time moſt terribly bruiſed the face of his benefactor.

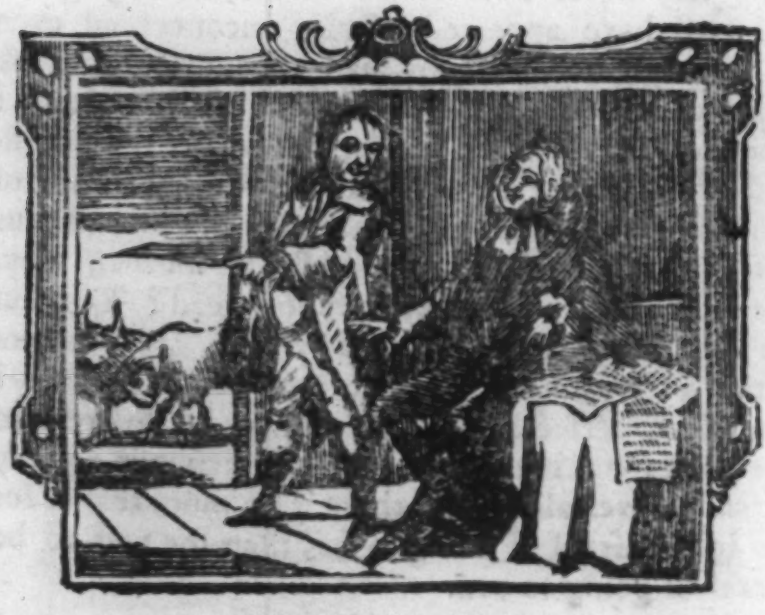


FABLE XXIV.

The Paſſenger and the Pilot.

IT had blown a violent ſtorm at ſea, and the whole crew of a large veſſel were in imminent danger of ſhipwreck. After the rolling of the waves were ſomewhat abated, a certain Paſſenger,

who had never been at ſea before, obſerving the Pilot to have appeared wholly unconcerned even in their greateſt danger, had the curioſity to aſk him what death his father died. What death? ſaid the Pilot, why he periſhed at ſea, as my grandfather did before him. And are you not afraid of truſting yourſelf to an element that has proved thus fatal to your family? Afraid! by no means; why, we muſt all die: is not your father dead? Yes, but he died in his bed. And why then are you not afraid of truſting yourſelf to your bed? Becauſe I am there perfectly ſecure. It may be ſo, replied the Pilot; but if the hand of Providence is equally extended over all places, there is no more reaſon for me to be afraid of going to ſea, than for you to be afraid of going to bed.



FABLE XXV.

The partial Judge.

A FARMER came to a neighbouring Lawyer, expreſſing great concern for an accident which he ſaid had juſt happened. One of your oxen, continued he, has been gored by an unlucky bull of mine, and I ſhould be glad to know how I am to make you reparation. Thou art a very honeſt fellow, replied the Lawyer, and wilt not think it unreaſonable that I expect one of thy oxen in return. It is no more than juſtice, quoth the Farmer, to be ſure; but what did I ſay?—I miſtake—It is your bull that has killed one of my oxen. Indeed! ſays the Lawyer, that alters the caſe: I muſt inquire into the affair; and *if*—And *if!* ſaid the Farmer—the buſineſs I find would have been concluded without an *if*, had you been as ready to do juſtice to others as to exact it from them.

FABLE XXVI.

The Fox that had loſt his Tail.

A FOX having been unwarily caught in a trap, with much ſtruggling and difficulty at length diſengaged himſelf; not however without being obliged to leave his tail behind him. The joy he felt at his eſcape, was ſomewhat abated when he began to conſider the price he had paid for it; and he was a good deal mortified by reflecting on the ridiculous figure he ſhould make among his brethren, without a tail. In the agitation of his thoughts upon this occaſion, an expedient occurred to him which he reſolved to try, in order to remove this diſgraceful ſingularity. With this view he aſſembled his tribe together, and ſet forth in a moſt elaborate ſpeech how much he had at heart whatever tended to the public weal: he had often thought, he ſaid, on the length and buſhineſs of their Tails; was verily perſuaded that they were

much more burdenſome than ornamental, and rendered them beſides an eaſier prey to their enemies. He earneſtly recommended it to them therefore to diſcharge themſelves of ſo uſeleſs and dangerous an incumbrance. My good friend, replied an old Fox, who had liſtened very attentively to his harangue, we are much obliged to you, no doubt, for the concern you expreſs upon our account: but pray turn about before the company, for I cannot for my life help ſuſpecting, that you would not be quite ſo ſolicitous to eaſe us of our tails, if you had not unluckily loſt your own.

FABLE XXVII.

The Nobleman and his Son.

A CERTAIN Nobleman, much infected by ſuperſtition, dreamed one night that his only Son, a youth about fifteen years of age, was thrown from his horſe as he was hunting, and killed upon

the ſpot. This idle dream made ſo ſtrong an impreſſion upon the weak and credulous father, that he formed a reſolution never more to ſuffer his Son to partake of this his favourite diverſion. The next morning that the hounds went out, the young man requeſted permiſſion to follow them; but inſtead of receiving it, as uſual, his father acquainted him with his dream, and peremptorily enjoined him to forbear the ſport. The youth, greatly mortified at this unexpected refuſal, left the room much diſconcerted, and it was with ſome difficulty that he reſtrained his paſſion from indecently breaking out in his father's preſence. But upon his return to his own apartment, paſſing through a gallery of pictures, in which was a piece repreſenting a company of gypſies telling a country girl her fortune—'Tis owing, ſaid he, to a ridiculous ſuperſtition of the ſame kind with that of this ſimple wench, that I am debarred from one of the principal pleaſures of my life: at the ſame time with great emotion, he ſtruck his hand againſt the canvas, when a ruſty old nail behind the picture ran far into his wriſt. The pain and anguiſh of the wound threw the youth into a violent fever, which proved too powerful for the ſkill of the phyſicians, and in a few days put an end to his life: illuſtrating an obſervation, that an over cautious attention to avoid evils, often bring them upon us; and that we are frequently thrown headlong into misfortunes by the very means we make uſe of to avoid them.

FABLE XXVIII.

Jupiter and the Herdſman.

A HERDSMAN miſſed a young heifer out of his grounds, and after having diligently ſought for it in vain, when he could by no other means gain intelligence of it, betook himſelf at laſt to his prayers. Great Jupiter, ſaid he, ſhew me but the villain who has done me this injury, and I will give thee in ſacrifice the fineſt kid from my flock. He had no ſooner uttered his petition, than turning the corner of a wood, he was ſtruck with the ſight of a monſtrous lion, preying on the carcaſe of his heifer. Trembling and pale, O Jupiter, cried he, I offered thee a kid if thou wouldſt grant my petition; I now offer thee a Bull, if thou wilt deliver me from the conſequence of it.

FABLE XXIX.

The Eagle and the Owl.

AN Eagle and an Owl having entered into a league of mutual amity, one of the articles of their treaty was, that the former ſhould not prey upon the younglings of the latter. But tell me ſaid the Owl, ſhould you know my little ones, if you were to ſee them? Indeed I ſhould not, replied the Eagle; but if you deſcribe them to me, it will be ſufficient. You are to obſerve then, returned the Owl, in the firſt place, that the charming creatures are perfectly well ſhaped; in the next, that there is a remarkable ſweetneſs and vivacity in their countenances; and then there is ſomething in their voices ſo peculiarly melodious:—'Tis enough, interrupted the Eagle; by theſe marks I cannot fail of diſtinguiſhing them: and you may depend upon their never receiving any injury from me. It happened not long afterwards, as the Eagle was upon

the wing in queſt of his prey, that he diſcovered amidſt the ruins of an old caſtle a neſt of grim-faced ugly birds, with gloomy countenances, and a voice like that of the Furies. Theſe, undoubtedly, ſaid he, cannot be the offſpring of my friend, and ſo I will venture to make free with them. He had ſcarce finiſhed his repaſt and departed, when the Owl returned; who, finding nothing of her brood remaining but ſome fragments of the mangled carcaſes, broke out into the moſt bitter exclamations againſt the cruel and perfidious author of her calamity. A neighbouring bat, who overheard her lamentations, and had been witneſs to what had paſſed between her and the Eagle, very gravely told her, that ſhe had nobody to blame for this misfortune but herſelf; whoſe blind prejudices in favour of her children had prompted her to give ſuch a deſcription of them, as did not reſemble them in any one ſingle feature or quality.

Parents ſhould very carefully guard againſt that weak partiality towards their children, which renders them blind to their failings and imperfections: as no diſpoſition is more likely to prove prejudicial to their future welfare.

FABLE XXX.

The Plague among the Beaſts.

A MORTAL diſtemper once raged among the Beaſts, and ſwept away prodigious numbers. After it had continued ſome time without abatement, it was concluded in an aſſembly of the brute creation to be a judgment inflicted upon them for their ſins; and a day was appointed for a general confeſſion; when it was agreed, that he who appeared to be the greateſt ſinner, ſhould ſuffer death as an atonement for the reſt. The Fox was appointed Father Confeſſor upon the occaſion; and the Lion, with great generoſity, condeſcended to be the firſt in making public confeſſion. For my part, ſaid he, I muſt own I have been an enormous offender; I have killed many innocent ſheep in my time, nay once, but it was a caſe of neceſſity, I made a meal of the ſhepherd. The Fox, with much gravity, acknowledged that theſe in any other

than the king would have been inexpiable crimes; but that his majeſty had certainly a right to a few ſilly ſheep, nay, and to the ſhepherd too, in a caſe of neceſſity. The judgment of the Fox was applauded by all the ſuperior ſavages; and the Tiger, the Leopard, the Bear, and the Wolf, made confeſſion of many enormities of the like ſanguinary nature; which were all palliated or excuſed with the ſame lenity and mercy, and their crimes accounted ſo venial as ſcarce to deſerve the name of offences. At laſt a poor penitent Aſs, with great contrition, acknowledged, that once going through the parſon's meadow, being very hungry, and tempted by the ſweetneſs of the graſs, he had cropt a little of it, not more however in quantity than the tip of his tongue: he was very ſorry for the miſdemeanour, and hoped ——Hope! exclaimed the Fox with ſingular zeal, what canſt thou hope for, after the commiſſion of ſo heinous a crime? What, eat the Parſon's graſs! O ſacrilege! This, this is the flagrant wickedneſs, my brethren, which has drawn the wrath of Heaven upon our heads; and this the notorious offender whoſe death muſt make atonement for all our tranſgreſſions. So ſaying, he ordered his entrails for ſacrifice, and the reſt of the Beaſts went to dinner upon his carcaſe.

FABLE XXXI.

The Cat, the Cock, and the young Mouſe.

A YOUNG Mouſe, who had ſeen very little of the world, came running one day to his mother in great haſte—O mother, ſaid he, I am frighted almoſt to death! I have ſeen the moſt extraordinary creature that ever was. He has a fierce, angry look, and ſtruts about upon two legs: a ſtrange piece of fleſh grows on his head, and another under his throat, as red as blood: he flapped his arms againſt his ſides, as if he intended to riſe into the air; and ſtretching out his head, he opened a ſharp-pointed mouth ſo wide, that I thought he was preparing to ſwallow me up: then he roared at me ſo horribly, that I trembled every joint, and was glad to run home as faſt as I could. If I had not been frightened away by this terrible monſter, I was juſt going to commence an acquaintance with the pretſieſt creature you ever ſaw. She had a ſoft fur

ſkin, thicker than ours, and all beautifully ſtreaked with black and grey; with a modeſt look, and a demeanour ſo humble and courteous, that methought I could have fallen in love with her. Then ſhe had a fine long tail, which ſhe waved about ſo prettily, and looked ſo earneſtly at me, that I do believe ſhe was juſt going to ſpeak to me, when the horrid monſter frightened me away. Ah, my dear child, ſaid the mother, you have eſcaped being devoured, but not by that monſter you was ſo much afraid of; which, in truth, was only a bird, and would have done you no manner of harm. Whereas the ſweet creature, of whom you ſeem ſo fond, was no other than a Cat; who, under that hypocritical countenance, conceals the moſt inveterate hatred to all our race, and ſubſiſts entirely by devouring mice. Learn from this incident, my dear, never whilſt you live to rely on outward appearances.

FABLE XXXII.

The Farmer and his Dog.

A FARMER who had juſt ſtepped into the field to mend a gap in one of his fences, found at his return the cradle, where he had left his only child aſleep, turned upſide down, the clothes all torn and bloody, and his Dog lying near it beſmeared alſo with blood. Immediately conceiving that the creature had deſtroyed his child, he inſtantly daſhed out his brains with the hatchet in his hand: when turning up the cradle, he found his child unhurt, and an enormous ſerpent lying dead on the floor, killed by that faithful Dog, whoſe courage and fidelity in preſerving the life of his ſon deſerved another kind of reward. Theſe affecting circumſtances afforded him a ſtriking leſſon, how dangerous it is too haſtily to give way to the blind impulſe of a ſudden paſſion.

FABLE XXXIII.

The Gnat and the Bee.

A GNAT, half ſtarved with cold, and pinched with hunger, came early one morning to a Bee-hive, begged the relief of charity, and offered to teach muſic in the family, on the humble terms of diet and lodging The Bee received her petitioner with a cold civility, and deſired to be excuſed. I bring up all my children, ſaid ſhe, to my own uſeful trade, that they may be able when they grow up to get an honeſt livelihood by their induſtry. Beſides, how do you think I could be ſo imprudent as to teach them an art, w'ich I ſee has reduced its profeſſor to indigence and beggary?

FABLE XXXIV.

The Owl and the Eagle.

AN Owl ſat blinking in the trunk of an hollow tree, and arraigned the brightneſs of the Sun. What is the uſe of its beams, ſaid ſhe, but to dazzle one's eyes ſo that one cannot ſee a Mouſe? For my part, I am at a loſs to conceive for what purpoſe ſo glaring an object was created. We had certainly been much better without it. O fool! replied an Eagle, perched on a branch of the ſame tree, to rail at excellence which thou canſt not taſte; ignorant that the fault is not in the Sun, but in thyſelf. All, 'tis true, have not faculties to underſtand, nor powers to enjoy the benefit of it: but muſt the buſineſs and the pleaſures of the world be obſtructed, that an Owl may catch Mice?

FABLE XXXV.

The ſick Lion, the Fox, and the Wolf.

A LION, having ſurfeited himſelf with feaſting too luxurioufly on the carcaſe of a wild boar, was ſeized with a violent and dangerous diſorder. The beaſts of the foreſt flocked in great numbers to pay their reſpects to him upon the occaſion, and ſcarce one was abſent, except the Fox. The Wolf, an ill-natured and malicious beaſt, ſeized this opportunity to accuſe the Fox of pride, ingratitude, and diſaffection to his majeſty. In the midſt of his invective, the Fox entered, who having heard part of the Wolf's accuſation, and obſerving the Lion's countenance to be kindled into wrath, thus adroitly excuſed himſelf, and retorted upon his accuſer. I ſee many here, who, with mere lip-ſervice, have pretended to ſhew you their loyalty; but for my part, from the moment I heard of your majeſty's illneſs, neglecting uſeleſs compliments, I employed myſelf

day and night to inquire among the moſt learned phyſicians, an infallible remedy for your diſeaſe, and have at length happily been informed of one. It is a plaiſter made of part of a Wolf's ſkin, taken warm from his back, and laid to your majeſty's ſtomach. This remedy was no ſooner propoſed, than it was determined that the experiment ſhould be tried: and whilſt the operation was performing the Fox, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile, whiſpered this uſeful maxim in the Wolf's ear—If you would be ſafe from harm yourſelf, learn for the future not to meditate miſchief againſt others.

FABLE XXXVI.

The Blind Man and the Lame.

'TIS from our wants and infirmities that almoſt all the connexions of ſociety take their riſe.

A Blind Man, being ſtopped in a bad piece of road, meets with a lame Man, and intreats him to guide him through the difficulty he was got into. How can I do that, replied the lame Man, ſince I am ſcarce able to drag myſelf along? But as you appear to be very ſtrong, if you will carry me, we will ſeek our fortunes together. It will then be my intereſt to warn you of any thing that may obſtruct your way: your feet ſhall be my feet, and my eyes yours. With all my heart, returned the blind Man; let us render each other our mutual ſervices. So taking his lame companion on his back, they, by means of their union, travelled on with ſafety and pleaſure.

FABLE XXXVII.

The Lion, the Bear, the Monkey, and the Fox.

THE tyrant of the foreſt iſſued a proclamation, commanding all his ſubjects to repair immediately to his royal den. Among the reſt, the Bear

made his appearance ; but pretending to be offended with the ſteams which iſſued from the monarch's apartments, he was imprudent enough to hold his noſe in his majeſty's preſence. This inſolence was ſo highly reſented, that the Lion in a rage laid him dead at his feet. The Monkey, obſerving what had paſſed, trembled for his carcaſe ; and attempted to conciliate favour by the moſt abject flattery. He began with proteſting, that for his part he thought the apartments were perfumed with Arabian ſpices ; and exclaiming againſt the rudeneſs of the Bear, admired the beauty of his majeſty's paws, ſo happily formed, he ſaid, to correct the inſolence of clowns. This fulſome adulation, inſtead of being received as he expected, proved no leſs offenſive than the rudeneſs of the Bear : and the courtly Monkey was in like manner extended by the ſide of Sir Bruin. And now his majeſty caſt his eye upon the Fox. Well, Reynard, ſaid he, and what ſcent do you diſcover here ? Great prince, replied the cautious Fox, my noſe was never eſteemed my moſt diſtinguiſhing ſenſe ; and at preſent, I would by no means venture to give my opinion, as I have unfortunately got a terrible cold.

FABLE XXXVIII.

The Owl and the Nightingale.

A FORMAL ſolemn Owl had many years made his habitation in a grove amongſt the ruins of an old monaſtry, and had pored ſo often on ſome mouldy manuſcripts, the ſtupid relics of a monkiſh library, that he grew infected with the pride and pedantry of the place; and miſtaking gravity for wiſdom, would ſit whole days with his eyes half ſhut, fancying himſelf profoundly learned. It happened, as he ſat one evening, half buried in meditation, and half aſleep, that a Nightingale, unluckily perching near him, began her melodious lays. He ſtarted from his reverie, and with a horrid ſcreech interrupting her ſong—Begone, cried he, thou impertinent minſtrel, nor diſtract with noiſy diſſonance my ſublime contemplations; and know, vain ſongſter, that harmony conſiſts in truth alone, which is gained by laborious ſtudy; and not

in languiſhing notes, fit only to ſooth the ear of a love-ſick maid. Conceited pedant, returned the Nightingale, whoſe wiſdom lies only in the feathers that muffle up thy unmeaning face; muſic is a natural and rational entertainment, and though not adapted to the ears of an Owl, has ever been reliſhed and admired by all who are poſſeſſed of true taſte and elegance.

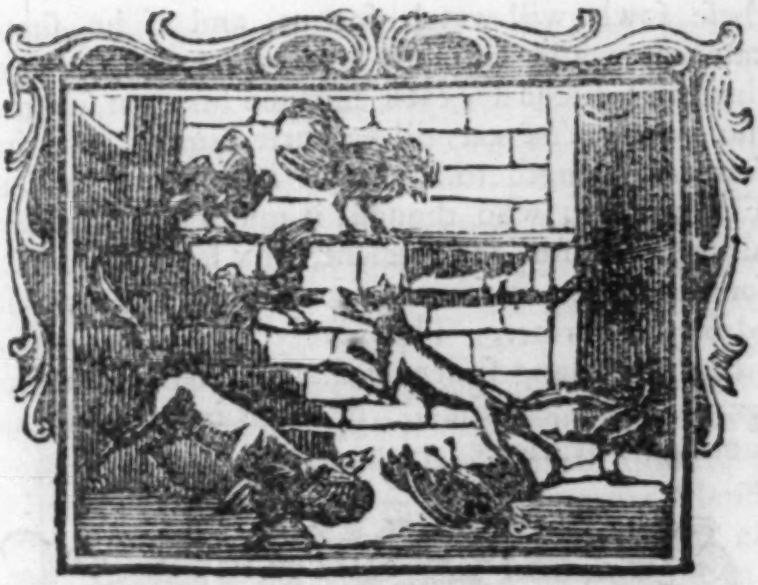
FABLE XXXIX.

The Ant and the Caterpillar.

AS a Caterpillar was advancing very ſlowly along one of the alleys of a beautiful garden, he was met by a pert lively Ant, who toſſing up her head with a ſcornful air, cried, Prithee get out of the way, thou poor creeping animal, and do not preſume to obſtruct the paths of thy ſuperiors, by wriggling along the road, and beſmearing the walks appropriated to their footſteps. Poor creature! thou

lookeſt like a thing half made which nature not liking, threw by unfiniſhed. I could almoſt pity thee, methinks; but it is beneath one of my quality to talk to ſuch mean creatures as thou art: and ſo, poor crawling wretch, adieu.

The humble Caterpillar, ſtruck dumb with this diſdainful language, retired, went to work, wound himſelf up in a ſilken cell, and at the appointed time came out a beautiful Butterfly. Juſt as he was ſallying forth, he obſerved the ſcornful Ant paſſing by: Proud inſect, ſaid he, ſtop a moment, and learn from the circumſtances in which you now ſee me, never to deſpiſe any one for that condition in which Providence has thought fit to place him; as there is none ſo mean, but may one day, either in this ſtate or in a better, be exalted above thoſe who looked down upon him with unmerited contempt.

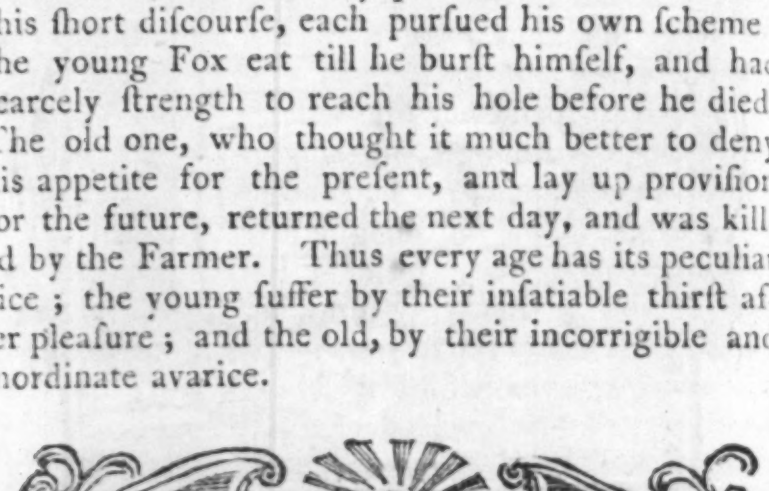


FABLE XL.

The two Foxes.

TWO Foxes formed a ſtratagem to enter a hen-rooſt: which having ſucceſsfully executed, and killed the Cock, the Hens, and the Chickens, they began to feed upon them with ſingular ſatisfaction. One of the Foxes, who was young and inconſiderate, was for devouring them all upon the ſpot: the other, who was old and covetous, propoſed to reſerve ſome of them for another time; for experience, child, ſaid he, has made me wiſe, and I have ſeen many unexpected events ſince I came into the world. Let us provide, therefore, againſt what may happen, and not conſume all our ſtore at one meal. All this is wondrous wiſe, replied the young Fox; but for my part, I am reſolved not to ſtir till I have eaten as much as will ſerve me a whole week; for who would be mad enough to return hither? when it is certain the owner of

theſe fowls will watch for us, and if he ſhould catch us would certainly put us to death. After this ſhort diſcourſe, each purſued his own ſcheme: the young Fox eat till he burſt himſelf, and had ſcarcely ſtrength to reach his hole before he died. The old one, who thought it much better to deny his appetite for the preſent, and lay up proviſion for the future, returned the next day, and was killed by the Farmer. Thus every age has its peculiar vice; the young ſuffer by their inſatiable thirſt after pleaſure; and the old, by their incorrigible and inordinate avarice.



FABLE XLI.

The conceited Owl.

A YOUNG Owl, having accidentally ſeen himſelf in a cryſtal fountain, conceived the higheſt opinion of his perſonal perfections. 'Tis time, ſaid he, that Hymen ſhould give me children as beauti-

ful as myſelf to the glory of the night, and the ornament of our groves. What pity would it be, if the race of the moſt accompliſhed of birds ſhould be extinct for want of a mate! Happy the female who is deſtined to ſpend her life with me! Full of theſe ſelf-approving thoughts, he entreated the crow to propoſe a match between him and the royal daughter of the eagle. Do you imagine, ſaid the crow, that the noble eagle, whoſe pride it is to gaze on the brighteſt of the heavenly luminaries, will conſent to marry his daughter to you, who cannot ſo much as open your eyes whilſt it is day-light? but the ſelf-conceited Owl was deaf to all that his friend could urge; who, after much perſuaſion, was at length prevailed upon to undertake the commiſſion. His propoſal was received in the manner that might be expected: the king of birds laughed him to ſcorn. However, being a monarch of ſome humour, he ordered him to acquaint the Owl, that if he would meet him the next morning at ſun-riſe in the middle of the ſky, he would conſent to give him his daughter in marriage. The preſumptuous Owl undertook to perform the condition; but being dazzled with the ſun, and his head growing giddy, he fell from his height upon a rock; from whence being purſued by a flight of birds, he was glad at laſt to make his eſcape into the hollow of an old oak; where he paſſed the remainder of his days in that obſcurity for which nature deſigned him.

FABLE XLII.

The Fox and the Cat.

NOTHING is more common than for men to condemn the very ſame actions in others, which they practiſe themſelves whenever occaſion offers.

A Fox and a Cat having made a party to travel together, beguiled the tedioufneſs of their journey by a variety of philoſophical converſations. Of all the moral virtues, exclaimed Reynard, mercy is ſure the nobleſt! What ſay you, my ſage friend, is it not ſo? Undoubtedly, replied the Cat, with a moſt demure countenance; nothing is more becoming, in a creature of any ſenſibility, than a compaſſionate diſpoſition. While they were thus moralizing, and mutually complimenting each other on the wiſdom of their reſpective reflections, a wolf darted out from a wood upon a flock of ſheep,

which were feeding in an adjacent meadow; and without being in the leaſt affected by the moving lamentations of a poor lamb, devoured it before their eyes. Horrible cruelty! exclaimed the Cat; why does he not feed on vermin, inſtead of making his barbarous meals on ſuch innocent creatures? Reynard agreed with his friend in the obſervation; to which he added ſeveral very pathetic remarks on the odiouſneſs of a ſanguinary temper. Their indignation was riſing in its warmth and zeal, when they arrived at a little cottage by the way-ſide; where the tender-hearted Reynard immediately caſt his eye upon a fine cock that was ſtrutting about the yard. And now, adieu moralizing: he leapt over the pales, and without any ſort of ſcruple, demoliſhed his prize in an inſtant. In the mean while, a plump mouſe, which ran out of the ſtable, totally put to flight our Cat's philoſophy, who fell to the repaſt without the leaſt commiſeration.

FABLE XLIII.

The two Horſes.

TWO Horſes were travelling the road together; one loaded with a ſack of flour, the other with a ſum of money. The latter proud of his ſplendid burden, toſſed up his head with an air of conſcious ſuperiority, and every now and then caſt a look of contempt upon his humble companion. In paſſing through a wood, they were met by a gang of highwaymen, who immediately ſeized upon the Horſe that was carrying the treaſure: but the ſpirited Steed not being altogether diſpoſed to ſtand ſo quietly as was neceſſary for their purpoſe, they beat him moſt unmercifully, and after plundering him of his boaſted load, left him to lament at his leiſure the cruel bruiſes he had received. Friend, ſaid his deſpiſed companion to him, who had now reaſon to triumph in his turn, diſtinguiſhed poſts are often dangerous to thoſe who poſſeſs them: if you had ſerved a miller, as I do, you might have travelled the road unmoleſted.

FABLE XLIV.

The Dove and the Ant.

WE ſhould be always ready to do good offices, even to the meaneſt of our fellow-creatures; as there is no one to whoſe aſſiſtance we may not, upon ſome occaſion or other, be greatly indebted.

A Dove was ſipping from the banks of a rivulet, when an Ant, who was at the ſame time trailing a grain of corn along the edge of a brook, inadvertently fell in. The Dove obſerving the helpleſs inſect ſtruggling in vain to reach the ſhore, was touched with compaſſion; and plucking a blade of graſs, dropped it into the ſtream; by means of which the poor Ant, like a ſhip-wrecked ſailor upon a plank, got ſafe to land. She had ſcarcely arrived there, when ſhe perceived a fowler juſt going to

diſcharge his piece at her deliverer; upon which ſhe inſtantly crept up his foot and ſtung him on the ancle. The ſportſman ſtarting, occaſioned a ruſtling among the boughs, which alarmed the Dove, who immediately ſprung up, and by that means eſcaped the danger with which ſhe was threatened.

FABLE XLV.

The Parrot.

A CERTAIN Widower, in order to amuſe his ſolitary hours, and in ſome meaſure ſupply the converſation of his departed help-mate of loquacious memory, determined to purchaſe a Parrot. With this view he applied to a dealer in birds, who ſhewed him a large collection of Parrots of various kinds. Whilſt they were exerciſing their talkative talents before him, one repeating the cries of the town, another aſking for a cup of ſack, and a third bawling out for a coach, he obſerved a green Par-

rot, perched in a thoughtful manner at a diſtance upon the foot of a table: And ſo you, my grave gentleman, ſaid he, are quite ſilent. To which the Parrot replied, like a philoſophical bird, "I think the more." Pleaſed with this ſenſible anſwer, our Widower immediately paid down his price, and took home the bird, conceiving great things from a creature who had given ſo ſtriking a ſpecimen of his parts. But after having inſtructed him during a whole month, he found, to his great diſappointment, that he could get nothing more from him than the fatiguing repetition of the ſame dull ſentence, "I think the more." I find, ſaid he, in great wrath, that thou art a moſt invincible fool: and ten times more a fool was I, for having formed a favourable opinion of thy abilities upon no better foundation than an affected ſolemnity.

FABLE XLVI.

The Cat and the Bat.

A CAT having devoured her maſter's favourite bulfinch, overheard him threatening to put her to death the moment he could find her. In this diſtreſs ſhe preferred a prayer to Jupiter; vowing, if he would deliver her from her preſent danger, that never while ſhe lived would ſhe eat another bird. Not long afterwards, a Bat moſt invitingly flew into the room where Puſs was purring in the window. The queſtion was, how to act upon ſo tempting an occaſion? Her appetite preſſed hard on one ſide; and her vow threw ſome ſcruples in her way on the other. At length ſhe hit upon a moſt convenient diſtinction to remove all difficulties, by determining that as a bird indeed it was an unlawful prize, but as a mouſe ſhe might very conſcientiouſly eat it; and accordingly, without further debate, fell to the repaſt.

Thus it is that men are apt to impoſe upon themſelves by vain and groundleſs diſtinctions, when conſcience and principle are at variance with intereſt and inclination.

FABLE XLVII.

The two Lizards.

AS two Lizards were baſking under a ſouth-wall, How contemptible, ſaid one of them, is our condition! We exiſt, 'tis true, but that is all: for we hold no ſort of rank in the creation, and are utterly unnoticed by the world. Curſed obſcurity! Why was I not rather born a ſtag, to range at large, the pride and glory of ſome royal foreſt? It happened, that in the midſt of theſe unjuſt murmurs, a pack of hounds was heard in full cry after the very creature he was envying, who being quite ſpent with the chaſe, was torn in pieces by the dogs, in ſight of our two Lizards. And is this the lordly ſtag, whoſe place in the creation you

wiſh to hold? ſaid the wiſer Lizard to his complaining friend: Let his ſad fate teach you to bleſs providence for placing you in that humble ſituation, which ſecures you from the dangers of a more elevated rank.

FABLE XLVIII.

Jupiter's Lottery.

JUPITER, in order to pleaſe mankind, directed Mercury to give notice that he had eſtabliſhed a Lottery, in which there were no blanks; and that, amongſt a variety of other valuable chances, Wiſdom was the higheſt prize. It was Jupiter's command, that in this Lottery ſome of the gods ſhould alſo become adventurers. The tickets being diſpoſed of, and the wheels placed, Mercury was employed to preſide at the drawing. It happened that the beſt prize fell to Minerva: upon which a general murmur ran through the aſſembly, and hints were

thrown out that Jupiter had uſed ſome unfair practices to ſecure this deſirable lot to his daughter. Jupiter, that he might at once both puniſh and ſilence theſe impious clamours of the human race, preſented them with Folly in the place of Wiſdom; with which they went away perfectly well contented. And from that time the greateſt fools have always looked upon themſelves as the wiſeſt men.

FABLE XLIX.

The litigious Cats.

TWO Cats having ſtolen ſome cheeſe, could not agree about dividing their prize. In order therefore to ſettle the diſpute, they conſented to refer the matter to a monkey. The propoſed arbitrator very readily accepted the office, and producing a balance, put a part into each ſcale. Let me ſee, ſaid he, ay—this lump outweighs the other:

and immediately bit off a conſiderable piece, in order to reduce it, he obſerved, to an equilibrium. The oppoſite ſcale was now become the heavieſt; which afforded our conſcientious judge an additional reaſon for a ſecond mouthful. Hold, hold, ſaid the two Cats, who began to be alarmed for the event, give us our reſpective ſhares, and we are ſatisfied. If You are ſatisfied, returned the monkey, juſtice is not: a caſe of this intricate nature is by no means ſo ſoon determined. Upon which he continued to nibble firſt at one piece, and then the other, till the poor Cats, ſeeing their cheeſe gradually diminiſhing, entreated him to give himſelf no farther trouble, but deliver to them what remained. Not ſo faſt, I beſeech you, friends, replied the Monkey; we owe juſtice to ourſelves as well as to you: what remains is due to me in right of my office. Upon which he crammed the whole into his mouth, and with great gravity diſmiſſed the court.

FABLE L.

The two Dogs.

HASTY and inconſiderate connexions are generally attended with great diſadvantages: and much of every man's good or ill fortune depends upon the choice he makes of his friends.

A good-natured Spaniel overtook a ſurly Maſtiff, as he was travelling upon the high road. Tray, although an entire ſtranger to Tiger, very civilly accoſted him; and if it would be no interruption, he ſaid, he ſhould be glad to bear him company on his way. Tiger, who happened not to be altogether in ſo growling a mood as uſual, accepted the propoſal; and they very amicably purſued their journey together. In the midſt of their converſation they arrived at the next village, where Tiger began to diſplay his malignant diſpoſition, by an

unprovoked attack upon every Dog he met. The villagers immediately ſallied forth with great indignation to reſcue their reſpective favourites; and falling upon our two friends without diſtinction, or mercy, poor Tray was moſt cruelly treated, for no other reaſon but his being found in bad company.

FABLE LI.

Death and Cupid.

JUPITER ſent forth Death and Cupid to travel round the world, giving each of them a bow in his hand, and a quiver of arrows at his back. It was ordered by the Supreme Diſpoſer of all events, that the arrows of Love ſhould only wound the young, in order to ſupply the decays of mortal men; and thoſe of Death were to ſtrike old age, and free the world from an uſeleſs charge. Our travellers, being one day extremely fatigued with

their journey, reſted themſelves under the covert of a wood, and throwing down their arrows in a promiſcuous manner, they both fell faſt aſleep. They had not repoſed themſelves long, before they were awakened by a ſudden noiſe; when haſtily gathering up their arms, each in a confuſion took by miſtake ſome of the darts that belonged to the other. By this means, it frequently happened that Death vanquiſhed the young, and Cupid ſubdued the old. Jupiter obſerved the error, but did not think proper to redreſs it; foreſeeing that ſome good might ariſe from their unlucky exchange. And, in fact, if men were wiſe, they would learn from this miſtake to be apprehenſive of Death in their youth, and to guard againſt the amorous paſſions in their old age.

FABLE LII.

The Mock Bird.

THERE is a certain Bird in the Weſt-Indies, which has the faculty of mimicing the notes of every other ſongſter, without being able himſelf to add any original ſtrains to the concert. As one of theſe Mock birds was diſplaying his talent of ridicule among the branches of a venerable wood: 'Tis very well, ſaid a little warbler, ſpeaking in the name of all the reſt, we grant you that our muſic is not without its faults: but why will you not favour us with a ſtrain of your own?

FABLE LIII.

The Spectacles.

HOW ſtrangely all mankind differ in their opinions! and how ſtrongly each is attached to his own!

Jupiter one day, enjoying himſelf over a bowl of nectar, and in a merry humour, determined to make mankind a preſent. Momus was appointed to convey it to them; who, mounted on a rapid car, was preſently on earth. Come hither, ſays he, ye happy mortals; great Jupiter has opened for your benefits his all-gracious hands. 'Tis true, he made you ſomewhat ſhort-ſighted, but to remedy that inconvenience, behold how he has favoured you! So ſaying, he unlooſed his portmanteau, when an infinite number of Spectacles tumbled out, and were picked up by the crowd with all

the eagerneſs imaginable. There were enough for all, every man had his pair. But it was ſoon found that theſe Spectacles did not repreſent objects to all mankind alike: for one pair was purple, another blue; one was white, and another black: ſome of the glaſſes were red, ſome green, and ſome yellow. In ſhort, there were all manner of colours, and every ſhade of colour. However, notwithſtanding this diverſity, every man was charmed with his own, as believing it the trueſt; and enjoyed in opinion all the ſatisfaction of reality.

FABLES.

BOOK III.

NEWLY INVENTED.

FABLE I.

The Red-breaſt and the Sparrow.

AS a Red-breaſt was ſinging on a tree by the ſide of a rural cottage, a Sparrow perched upon the thatch, took occaſion thus to reprimand him: and doſt Thou, ſaid he, with thy dull autumnal note, preſume to emulate the Birds of Spring? Can thy weak warblings pretend to vie with the ſprightly accents of the thruſh and the blackbird? with the various melody of the lark or the nightingale? whom otherbirds, far thy ſuperiors, have been long content to admire in ſilence. Judge with candour at leaſt, replied the Robin, nor impute thoſe efforts to ambition ſolely, which may ſometimes flow from Love of the Art. I reverence indeed, but by no means envy, the birds whoſe fame has ſtood the teſt of ages. Their ſongs have charmed both hill and dale; but their ſeaſon is paſt, and their throats are ſilent. I feel not, however, the ambition to

ſurpaſs or equal them: my efforts are of a much humbler nature; and I may ſurely hope for pardon, while I endeavour to cheer theſe forſaken vallies, by an attempt to imitate the ſtrains I love.

FABLE II.

The two Bees.

ON a fine morning in May, two Bees ſet forward in queſt of honey; the one wiſe and temperate, the other careleſs and extravagant. They ſoon arrived at a garden enriched with aromatic herbs, the moſt fragrant flowers, and the moſt delicious fruits. They regaled themſelves for a time on the various dainties that were ſpread before them: the one loading his thighs at intervals with proviſions for the hive againſt the diſtant winter; the other, revelling in ſweets without regard to any thing but his preſent gratification. At length they

found a wide-mouthed phial, that hung beneath the bough of a peach-tree, filled with honey ready tempered, and expoſed to their taſte in the moſt alluring manner. The thoughtleſs Epicure, ſpite of all his friend's remonſtrances, plunged headlong into the veſſel, reſolving to indulge himſelf in all the pleaſures of ſenſuality. The Philoſopher, on the other hand, ſipped a little with caution, but being ſuſpicious of danger, flew off to fruits and flowers; where, by the moderation of his meals, he improved his reliſh for the true enjoyment of them. In the evening, however, he called upon his friend, to inquire whether he would return to the hive; but found him ſurfeited in ſweets, which he was as unable to leave as to enjoy. Clogged in his wings, enfeebled in his feet, and his whole frame totally enervated, he was but juſt able to bid his friend adieu, and to lament with his lateſt breath that though a taſte of pleaſure might quicken the reliſh of life, an unreſtrained indulgence is inevitable deſtruction.

FABLE III.

The Diamond and the Glow-worm.

A DIAMOND happened to fall from the ſolitaire of a young lady, as ſhe was walking one evening on a terrace in the garden. A Glow-worm, who had beheld it ſparkle in its deſcent, ſoon as the gloom of night had eclipſed its luſtre, began to mock and to inſult it. Art thou that wondrous thing, that vaunteſt of thy prodigious brightneſs? Where now is all thy boaſted brilliancy? Alas, in evil hour has fortune thrown thee within the reach of my ſuperior blaze. Conceited inſect, replied the Gem, that oweſt thy feeble glimmer to the darkneſs that ſurrounds thee: know, my luſtre bears the teſt of day, and even derives its chief advantage from that diſtinguiſhing light, which diſcovers thee to be no more than a dark and paltry Worm.

FABLE IV.

The Oſtrich and the Pelican.

THE Oſtrich one day met the Pelican, and obſerving her breaſt all bloody, Good God! ſays ſhe to her, what is the matter? What accident has befallen you? You certainly have been ſeized by ſome ſavage beaſt of prey, and have with difficulty eſcaped from his mercileſs claws. Do not be ſurpriſed, friend, replied the Pelican; no ſuch accident, nor indeed any thing more than common hath happened to me. I have only been engaged in my ordinary employment of tending my neſt, of feeding my dear little ones, and nouriſhing them with the vital blood from my boſom. Your anſwer, returned the Oſtrich, aſtoniſhes me ſtill more than the horrid figure you make. What! is this your practice, to tear your own fleſh, to ſpill your own blood, and to ſacrifice yourſelf in this cruel manner to the important cravings of your young ones? I

know not which to pity moſt, your miſery, or your folly. Be adviſed by me; have ſome regard for yourſelf; and leave off this barbarous cuſtom of mangling your own body: as for your children, commit them to the care of Providence, and make yourſelf quite eaſy about them. My example may be of uſe to you: I lay my eggs upon the ground, and juſt cover them lightly over with ſand: if they have the good luck to eſcape being cruſhed by the tread of man or beaſt, the warmth of the ſun broods upon, and hatches them; and in due time my young ones come forth. I leave them to be nurſed by nature, and foſtered by the elements; I give myſelf no trouble about them, and I neither know nor care what becomes of them. Unhappy wretch, ſays the Pelican, who art hardened againſt thy offſpring, and through want of natural affection rendereſt thy travail fruitleſs to thyſelf! who knoweſt not the ſweets of a parent's anxiety, the tender delight of a mother's ſufferings! It is not I, but thou that art cruel to thy own fleſh. Thy inſenſibility may exempt thee from a temporary inconvenience, and an inconſiderable pain; but at the ſame time it makes thee inattentive to a moſt neceſſary duty, and incapable of reliſhing the pleaſure that attends it: a pleaſure, the moſt exquiſite that nature hath indulged to us; in which pain itſelf is ſwallowed up and loſt, or only ſerves to heighten the enjoyment.

FABLE V.

The Hounds in Couples.

A HUNTSMAN was leading forth his Hounds one morning to the chaſe, and had linked ſeveral of the young Dogs in Couples, to prevent their following every ſcent, and hunting diſorderly, as their own inclinations and fancy ſhould direct them. Among others, it was the fate of Jowler and Vixen to be thus yoked together. Jowler and Vixen were both young and inexperienced; but had for ſome time been conſtant companions, and ſeemed to have entertained a great fondneſs for each other; they uſed to be perpetually playing together, and in any quarrel that happened, always took one another's part; it might have been expected therefore, that it would not be diſagreeable to them to be ſtill more cloſely united. However, in fact, it proved otherwiſe: they had not been long joined together before both parties were obſerved to expreſs

uneaſineſs at their preſent ſituation. Different inclinations and oppoſite wills began to diſcover and to exert themſelves: if one choſe to go this way, the other was as eager to take the contrary; if one was preſſing forwards, the other was ſure to lag behind; Vixen pulled back Jowler, and Jowler dragged along Vixen: Jowler growled at Vixen, and Vixen ſnapped at Jowler: till at laſt it came to a downright quarrel between them; and Jowler treated Vixen in a very rough and ungenerous manner, without any regard to the inferiority of her ſtrength, or the tenderneſs of her ſex. As they were thus continually vexing and tormenting one another, an old Hound, who had obſerved all that paſſed, came up to them, and thus reproved them: "What a couple of ſilly Puppies you are, to be perpetually worrying yourſelves at this rate! What hinders your going on peaceably and quietly together? Cannot you compromiſe the matter between you by each conſulting the other's inclination a little? at leaſt, try to make a virtue of neceſſity, and ſubmit to what you cannot remedy: you cannot get rid of the chain, but you may make it ſit eaſy upon you. I am an old Dog, and let my age and experience inſtruct you: when I was in the ſame circumſtances with you, I ſoon found, that thwarting my companion was only tormenting myſelf; and my yoke-fellow happily came into the ſame way of thinking. We endeavoured to join in the ſame purſuits, and to follow one another's inclinations; and ſo we jogged on together, not only with eaſe and quiet, but with comfort and pleaſure. We found by experience, that mutual compliance not only compenſates for liberty, but is even attended with a ſatisfaction and delight, beyond what liberty itſelf can give."

FABLE VI.

The Miſer and the Magpye.

AS a Miſer ſat at his deſk, counting over his heaps of gold, a Magpye, eloped from his cage, picked up a guinea, and hopped away with it. The Miſer, who never failed to count his money over a ſecond time, immediately miſſed the piece, and riſing up from his ſeat in the utmoſt conſternation, obſerved the felon hiding it in a crevice of the floor. And art thou, cried he, that worſt of thieves, who haſt robbed me of my gold, without the plea of neceſſity, and without regard to its proper uſe? but thy life ſhall atone for ſo prepoſterous a villany. Soft words, good maſter, quoth the Magpye. Have I then injured you in any other ſenſe than you defraud the public? and am I not uſing your money in the ſame manner you do yourſelf? If I muſt loſe my life for hiding a ſingle guinea, what do you, I pray, deſerve, who ſecrete ſo many thouſands?

FABLE VII.

The Senſitive Plant and the Thiſtle.

A THISTLE happened to ſpring up very near to a Senſitive Plant. The former obſerving the extreme baſhfulneſs and delicacy of the latter, addreſſed her in the following manner: Why are you ſo modeſt and reſerved, my good neighbour, as to withdraw your leaves at the approach of ſtrangers? Why do you ſhrink as if you were afraid, from the touch of every hand? Take example and advice from me: If I liked not their familiarity, I would make them keep their diſtance, nor ſhould any ſaucy finger provoke me unrevenged. Our tempers and qualities, replied the other are widely different: I have neither the ability nor inclination to give offence: you, it ſeems, are by no means deſtitute of either. My deſire is to live peaceably in the ſtation wherein I was placed: and though my humility may now and then cauſe me a mo-

ment's uneaſineſs, it tends on the whole to preſerve my tranquillity. The caſe is otherwiſe with you, whoſe irritable temper, and revengeful diſpoſition, will probably, one time or other, be the cauſe of your deſtruction. While they were thus arguing the point, the Gardener came with his little ſpaddle, in order to lighten the earth round the ſtem of the Senſitive Plant; but perceiving the Thiſtle, he thruſts his inſtrument through the root of it, and toſſed it out of his garden.

FABLE VIII.

The Poet and the Death-watch.

AS a Poet ſat in his cloſet, feaſting his imagination on the hopes of Fame and Immortality, he was ſtartled on a ſudden with the ominous ſound of a Death-watch. However, immediately recollecting himſelf—Vain inſect, ſaid he, ceaſe thy impertinent forebodings, ſufficient indeed to

frighten the weakneſs of women, or of children; but far beneath the notice of a Poet and Philoſopher. As for me, whatever accident may threaten my life, my fame, ſpite of thy prognoſtics, ſhall live to future ages. It may be ſo, replied the inſect: I find at leaſt, thou hadſt rather liſten to the maggot in thy head, than to the worm beneath thy table; but know, that the ſuggeſtions of vanity are altogether as deceitful as thoſe of ſuperſtition.

FABLE IX.

Pythagoras and the Critic.

PYTHAGORAS was one day very earneſtly engaged in taking an exact meaſure of the length of the Olympic courſe One of thoſe conceited Critics who aim at every thing, and are ready to interpoſe with their opinion upon all ſubjects, happened to be preſent; and could not help ſmil-

ing to himſelf to ſee the Philoſopher ſo employed, and to obſerve what great attention and pains he beſtowed upon ſuch a buſineſs. And pray, ſays he, accoſting Pythagoras, may I preſume to aſk with what deſign you have given yourſelf this trouble? Of that, replied the Philoſopher, I ſhall very readily inform you. We are aſſured, that Hercules, when he inſtituted the Olympic games, himſelf laid out this courſe by meaſure, and determined it to be the length of ſix hundred feet, meaſuring it by the ſtandard of his own foot. Now by taking an exact meaſure of this ſpace, and ſeeing how much it exceeds the meaſure of the ſame number of feet now in uſe, we can find how much the foot of Hercules, and in proportion his whole ſtature, exceeded that of the preſent generation. A very curious ſpeculation, ſays the Critic, and of great uſe and importance, no doubt! And ſo you will demonſtrate to us, that the bulk of this fabulous Hero was equal to his extravagant enterpriſes and his marvellous exploits. And pray, Sir, what may be the reſult of your enquiry at laſt? I ſuppoſe, you can now tell me exactly to an hair's breadth, how tall Hercules was. The reſult of my inquiry, replied the Philoſopher, is this; and it is a concluſion of greater uſe and importance than you ſeem to expect from it; that if you will always eſtimate the labours of the Philoſopher, the deſigns of the Patriot, and the actions of the Hero, by the ſtandard of your own narrow conceptions, you will ever be greatly miſtaken in your judgment concerning them.

FABLE X.

The Bear.

A BEAR, who was bred in the ſavage deſerts of Siberia, had an inclination to ſee the world. He travelled from foreſt to foreſt, from one kingdom to another, making many profound obſervations in his way. Among the reſt of his excurſions, he came by accident into a farmer's yard, where he ſaw a number of poultry ſtanding to drink by the ſide of a pool. Obſerving that at every ſip they turned up their heads towards the ſky, he could not forbear inquiring the reaſon of ſo peculiar a ceremony. They told him, that it was by way of returning thanks to Heaven for the benefits they received; and was indeed an ancient and religious cuſtom, which they could not, with a ſafe conſcience, or without impiety, omit. Here the Bear burſt into a fit of laughter, at once mimicing their geſtures, and ridiculing their ſuper-

ſtition, in the moſt contemptuous manner.——On this, the cock, with a ſpirit ſuitable to the boldneſs of his character, addreſſed him in the following words: As you are a ſtranger, ſir, you perhaps may be excuſed the indecency of this behaviour; yet give me leave to tell you, that none but a Bear would ridicule any religious ceremonies whatſoever, in the preſence of thoſe who believe them of importance.

FABLE XI.

The Stork and the Crow.

A STORK and a Crow had once a ſtrong contention, which of them ſtood higheſt in the favour of Jupiter The Crow alledged his ſkill in omens, his infallibility in prophecies, and his great uſe to the prieſts of that deity in all their ſacrifices and religious ceremonies. The Stork urged only his blameleſs life, the care he took to preſerve his

offspring, and the aſſiſtance he lent his parents under the infirmities of age. It happened, as it generally does in religious diſputes, that neither of them could confute the other; ſo they both agreed to refer the deciſion to Jupiter himſelf On their joint application, the god determined thus between them: Let none of my creatures deſpair of my regard; I know their weakneſs; I pity their errors; and whatever is well meant, I accept as it was intended. Yet ſacrifices or ceremonies are in themſelves of no importance, and every attempt to penetrate the counſels of the gods is altogether as vain as it is preſumptuous: but he who pays to Jupiter a juſt honour and reverence, who leads the moſt temperate life, and who does the moſt good in proportion to his abilities, as he beſt anſwers the end of his creation, will aſſuredly ſtand higheſt in the favour of his Creator.

FABLE XII.

Echo and the Owl.

THE vain hear the flatteries of their own imagination, and fancy them to be the voice of fame.

A ſolemn Owl, puffed up with vanity, ſate repeating her ſcreams at midnight, from the hollow of a blaſted oak. And whence, cried ſhe, proceeds this awful ſilence, unleſs it be to favour my ſuperior melody? Surely the groves are huſhed in expectation of my voice, and when I ſing, all nature liſtens An Echo reſounding from an adjacent rock, replied immediately, "All nature liſtens." The Nightingale, reſumed ſhe, has uſurped the ſovereignty by night: her note indeed is muſical, but mine is ſweeter far. The voice confirming her opinion, replied again, "is ſweeter far." Why then am I diffident, continued ſhe, why do I fear

to join the tuneful choir? The Echo ſtill flattering her vanity, repeated, "join the tuneful choir." Rouſed by this empty phantom of encouragement, ſhe on the morrow mingled her hootings with the harmony of the groves. But the tuneful ſongſters, diſguſted with her noiſe, and affronted by her impudence, unanimouſly drove her from their ſociety, and ſtill continue to purſue her wherever ſhe appears.

FABLE XIII.

Prometheus.

PROMETHEUS formed man of the fineſt clay, and animated his work with fire ſtolen from Heaven. He endowed him with all the faculties that are to be found amongſt the animal creation: he gave him the courage of the Lion, the ſubtlety of the Fox, the providence of the Ant, and the in-

duſtry of the Bee; and he enabled him, by the ſuperiority of his underſtanding, to ſubdue them all, and to make them ſubſervient to his uſe and pleaſure. He diſcovered to him the metals hidden in the bowels of the earth, and ſhewed him their ſeveral uſes. He inſtructed him in every thing that might tend to cultivate and civilize human life; he taught him to till the ground, and to implore the fertility of nature; to build houſes, to cover himſelf with garments, and to defend himſelf againſt the inclemencies of the air and the ſeaſons; to compound medicines of ſalutary herbs, to heal wounds, and to cure diſeaſes; to conſtruct ſhips, to croſs the ſeas, and to communicate to every country the riches of all. In a word, he endued him with ſenſe and memory, with ſagacity and invention, with art and ſcience; and to crown all, he gave him an inſight into futurity. But, alas! this latter gift, inſtead of improving, wholly deſtroyed the proper effect of all the former. Furniſhed with all the means and inſtruments of happineſs, Man nevertheleſs was miſerable: through the knowledge and dread of future evil, he was incapable of enjoying preſent good. Prometheus ſaw, and immediately reſolved to remedy this inconvenience: he effectually reſtored Man to a capacity of happineſs, by depriving him of preſcience, and giving hope in its ſtead.

FABLE XIV.

Momus.

'TIS ſaid that Momus was perpetually blaming and ridiculing whatever he ſaw. Even the works of the gods themſelves could not eſcape his univerſal cenſure. The eyes of the Bull, he ſaid, were ſo placed by Jupiter, that they could not direct his horns in puſhing at his enemies. The houſes which Minerva had inſtructed men to build, were contrived ſo very injudiciouſly, that they could not be removed from a bad neighbourhood, nor from any other inconvenience. In ſhort, the frame of man himſelf was in his opinion extremely defective; having no window in his boſom that might demonſtrate his ſincerity, or betray his wicked purpoſes, and prevent their execution. Theſe and many other faults were found in the productions of nature; but when he ſurveyed the works of art, there was no end of his altercations. Jupiter,

being reſolved to try how far his malice would proceed, ſent his daughter Venus to deſire that he would give his opinion of her beauty. She appeared accordingly before the churliſh god, trembling at the apprehenſion of his known ſeverity. He examined her proportions with all the rigour of an envious critic. But her ſhape and complexion were ſo ſtriking, and her ſmiles and graces ſo very engaging, that he found it impoſſible to give the leaſt colour to any objection he could make. Yet to ſhew how hard malevolence will ſtruggle for a cavil, as ſhe was retiring from his preſence, he begged ſhe would acquaint her father, that whatever grace might be in her motion, yet—her ſlippers were too noiſy.

FABLE XV.

The Butterfly, the Snail, and the Bee.

A BUTTERFLY, proudly perched on the gaudy leaves of a French marygold, was boaſting the vaſt extent and variety of his travels. I have ranged, ſaid he, over the graceful and majeſtic ſcenes of * Hagley, and have feaſted my eyes with elegance and variety at † The Leaſowes. I have wandered through regions of eglantine and honeyſuckle, I have revelled in kiſſes on beds of violets and cowſlips, and have enjoyed the delicious fragrance of roſes and carnations. In ſhort, my fancy unbounded, and my flight unreſtrained, I have viſited with perfect freedom all the flowers of the field or garden, and muſt be allowed to know the world in a ſuperlative degree.

* Lord Lyttleton's. † Mr. Shenſtone's.

A Snail, who hung attentive to his wonders on a cabbage-leaf, was ſtruck with admiration; and concluded him, from all his experience, to be the wiſeſt of animal creatures.

It happened that a Bee purſued her occupation on a neighbouring bed of marjoram, and having heard our oſtentatious vagrant, reprimanded him in this manner. Vain, empty flutterer, ſaid ſhe, whom inſtruction cannot improve, nor experience itſelf enlighten! Thou haſt rambled over the world; wherein does thy knowledge of it conſiſt? Thou haſt ſeen variety of objects; what concluſions haſt thou drawn from them? Thou haſt taſted of every amuſement; haſt thou extracted any thing for uſe? I too am a traveller: go and look into my hive; and let my treaſures intimate to thee, that the end of travelling is to collect materials either for the uſe and emolument of private life, or for the advantage of the community.

FABLE XVI.

The Tuberoſe and the Sun-flower.

A TUBEROSE, in a bow-window on the north-ſide of a ſtately villa, addreſſed a Sun-flower which grew on a ſlope that was contiguous to the houſe. Pray, neighbour, ſays he, to what purpoſe do you pay all this devotion to that fictitious deity of yours, the Sun? Why are you ſtill diſtorting your body, and caſting up your eyes to that glaring luminary? What ſuperſtition induces you to think, that we flowers exiſt only through his influence? Both you and I are ſurely indebted to the hot-bed, and to the diligence of the gardener, for our production and ſupport. For my part, I ſhall reſerve my homage, together with my ſweets, for that benevolent maſter who is continually watering and refreſhing me: nor do I deſire ever to ſee the face of that ſun you ſo vainly idolize, while I can enjoy the cool ſhade of this magnificent ſaloon. Truce

with thy blaſphemies, replied the ſun-flower: why doſt thou revile that glorious Being, who diſpenſes life and vigour, not only to us, but to every part of the creation? Without this, alas! how ineffectual were the ſkill and vigilance of thy boaſted maſter, either to ſupport thy tender frame, or even to preſerve his own! But this muſt ever be the caſe with ſuch contracted underſtandings: ſufficient, indeed, to point out our more immediate benefactors, but diſregarding the original ſource from which all beneficence proceeds.

FABLE XVII.

The Magpye and the Raven.

THERE was a certain Magpye, more buſy and more loquacious than any of his tribe. His tongue was in perpetual motion, and himſelf continually upon the wing; fluttering from place to place, and very ſeldom appearing twice together in the ſame company.

Sometimes you ſaw him with a flock of pigeons plundering a field of new ſown corn; now perched upon a cherry-tree with a parcel of tom tits: the next moment, you would be ſurpriſed to find the ſame individual bird engaged with a flight of crows, and feaſting upon a carcaſe.

He took it one day into his head to viſit an old Raven, who lived retired among the branches of a venerable oak; and there, at the foot of a lonely mountain, had paſt near half a century.

I admire, ſays the prating bird, your moſt romantic ſituation, and the wildneſs of theſe rocks and precipices around you: I am abſolutely tranſported with the murmur of that waterfall; methinks it diffuſes a tranquillity ſurpaſſing all the joys of public life. What an agreeable ſequeſtration from worldly buſtle and impertinence! what an opportunity of contemplating the divine beauties of nature! I ſhall moſt certainly quit the gaieties of town, and for the ſake of theſe rural ſcenes, and my good friend's converſation, paſs the remainder of my days in the ſolitude he has choſen.

Well, ſir, replies the Raven, I ſhall be at all times glad to receive you in my old faſhioned way; but you and I ſhould certainly prove moſt unſuitable companions. Your whole ambition is to ſhine in company, and to recommend yourſelf to the world by univerſal complaiſance; whereas my greateſt happineſs conſiſts in eaſe and privacy, and the ſelect converſation of a few whom I eſteem. I prefer a good heart to the moſt voluble tongue; and though much obliged to you for the politeneſs of your profeſſions, yet I ſee your benevolence divided among ſo numerous an acquaintance, that a very ſlender ſhare of it can remain for thoſe you are pleaſed to honour with the name of friends.

FABLE XVIII.

The Diamond and the Loadſtone.

A DIAMOND of great beauty and luſtre, obſerving not only many other gems of a lower claſs ranged together with him in the ſame cabinet, but a Loadſtone likewiſe placed not far from him, began to queſtion the latter how he came there; and what pretenſions he had to be ranked among the precious ſtones: he, who appeared to be no better than a mere flint: a ſorry, coarſe, ruſty looking pebble; without any the leaſt ſhining quality to advance him to ſuch an honour; and concluded with deſiring him to keep his diſtance, and pay a proper reſpect to his ſuperiors. I find, ſaid the Loadſtone, you judge by external appearances; and it is your intereſt, that others ſhould form their judgment by the ſame rule. I muſt own I have nothing to boaſt of in that reſpect; but I may venture to ſay, that I make amends for my outward defects, by my in-

ward qualities. The great improvement of navigation in theſe latter ages is entirely owing to me. It is owing to me, that the diſtant parts of the world are known and acceſſible to each other; that the remoteſt nations are connected together, and all in a manner united into one common ſociety; that by a mutual intercourſe they relieve one another's wants, and all enjoy the ſeveral bleſſings peculiar to each. Great Britain is indebted to me for her wealth, her ſplendour, and her power; and the arts and ſciences are in a great meaſure obliged to me for their late improvements, and their continual increaſe. I am willing to allow you your due praiſe in its full extent; you are a very pretty bauble; I am mightily delighted to ſee you glitter and ſparkle; I look upon you with pleaſure and ſurpriſe: but I muſt be convinced that you are of ſome ſort of uſe, before I acknowledge that you have any real merit, or treat you with that reſpect which you ſeem to demand.

FABLE XIX.

The Boy and the Nettle.

A LITTLE Boy playing in the fields, chanced to be ſtung by a Nettle, and came crying to his father: He told him, he had been hurt by that naſty weed ſeveral times before; that he was always afraid of it; and that now he did but juſt touch it, as lightly as poſſible, when he was ſo ſeverely ſtung. Child, ſays he, your touching it ſo gently and timorouſly is the very reaſon of its hurting you. A Nettle may be handled ſafely, if you do it with courage and reſolution; If you ſeize it boldly, and gripe it faſt, be aſſured it will never ſting you: and you will meet with many ſorts of perſons, as well as things in the world, which ought to be treated in the very ſame manner.

FABLE XX.

The Monſter in the Sun.

AN aſtronomer was obſerving the Sun through a teleſcope, in order to take an exact draught of the ſeveral ſpots which appear upon the face of it. While he was intent upon his obſervations, he was on a ſudden ſurpriſed with a new and aſtoniſhing appearance; a large portion of the ſurface of the Sun was at once covered by a Monſter of enormous ſize, and horrible form; it had an immenſe pair of wings, a great number of legs, and a long and vaſt probocis; and that it was alive, was very apparent, from its quick and violent motions, which the obſerver could from time to time plainly perceive. Being ſure of the fact (for how could he be miſtaken in what he ſaw ſo clearly?) our philoſopher began to draw many ſurpriſing concluſions from premiſes ſo well eſtabliſhed. He calculated the magnitude of this extraordinary

animal, and found that he covered about two ſquare degrees of the Sun's ſurface; that placed upon the earth he would ſpread over half one hemiſphere of it; and that he was ſeven or eight times as big as the moon. But what was moſt aſtoniſhing, was the prodigious heat that he muſt endure; it was plain that he was ſomething of the nature of the ſalamander, but of a far more fiery temperament; for it was demonſtrable from the cleareſt principles, that in his preſent ſituation he muſt have acquired a degree of heat two thouſand times exceeding that of red-hot iron. It was a problem worth conſidering, whether he ſubſiſted upon the groſs vapours of the Sun, and ſo from time to time cleared away thoſe ſpots which they are perpetually forming, and which would otherwiſe wholly obſcure and incruſtrate its face; or whether it might not feed on the ſolid ſubſtance of the orb itſelf, which, by this means, together with the conſtant expence of light, muſt ſoon be exhauſted and conſumed; or whether he was not now and then ſupplied by the falling of ſome eccentric comet into the Sun. However this might be, he found by computation that the earth would be but ſhort allowance for him for a few months; and farther, it was no improbable conjecture, that as the earth was deſtined to be deſtroyed by fire, this fiery flying Monſter would remove hither at the appointed time, and might much more eaſily and conveniently effect a conflagration, than any comet hitherto provided for that ſervice. In the earneſt purſuit of theſe, and many the like deep and curious ſpeculations, the aſtronomer was engaged, and was preparing to communicate them to the public. In the mean time, the diſcovery began to be much talked of; and all the virtuoſi gathered together to ſee ſo ſtrange a ſight. They were equally convinced of the accuracy of the obſerva-

tion, and of the concluſions ſo clearly deduced from it. At laſt, one, more cautious than the reſt, was reſolved, before he gave a full aſſent to the report of his ſenſes, to examine the whole proceſs of the affair, and all the parts of the inſtrument; he opened the teleſcope, and behold! a ſmall fly was encloſed in it, which having ſettled on the centre of the object glaſs, had given occaſion to all this marvellous theory.

How often do men, through prejudice and paſſion, through envy and malice, fix upon the brighteſt and moſt exalted character the groſſeſt and moſt improbable imputations? It behoves us upon ſuch occaſions to be upon our guard, and to ſuſpend our judgments; the fault perhaps is not in the object, but in the mind of the obſerver.

FABLE XXI.

The diſcontented Bee.

A BEE complained to Jupiter of the numerous evils to which her condition was expoſed. Her body, ſhe ſaid, was weak and feeble, yet was ſhe condemned to get her living by perpetual toil; ſhe was benumbed by the cold of winter, and relaxed by the heat of ſummer. Her haunts were infeſted with poiſonous weeds, and her flights obſtructed by ſtorms and tempeſts. In ſhort, what with dangers from without, and diſeaſes from within, her life was rendered one continual ſcene of anxiety and wretchedneſs. Behold now, ſaid Jupiter, the frowardneſs and folly of this unthankful race! The flowers of the field I have ſpread before them as a feaſt, and have endeavoured to regale them with an endleſs variety. They now revel on odoriferous beds of thyme and lavender, and now on the ſtill more fragrant banks of violets and

roſes. The buſineſs they complain of is the extraction of honey; and, to alleviate their toil, I have allowed them wings, which readily tranſport them from one banquet to another. Storms, tempeſts, and noxious weeds, I have given them ſagacity to ſhun; and if they are miſled, 'tis through the perverſeneſs of their inclinations. But thus it is with Bees, and thus with Men: they miſconſtrue the benevolence of my deſigns, and then complain that my decrees are rigid: they ungratefully overlook all the advantages, and magnify all the inconveniences of their ſtations. But let my creatures purſue their happineſs through the paths marked out by nature; and they will then feel no pains which they have not pleaſures to compenſate.

FABLE XXII.

The Snipe Shooter.

AS a Sportſman ranged the fields with his gun attended by an experienced old ſpaniel, he happened to ſpring a ſnipe, and almoſt at the ſame inſtant a covey of partridges. Surpriſed at the accident, and divided in his aim, he let fly too indeterminately, and by this means miſſed them both. Ah, my good maſter, ſaid the ſpaniel, you ſhould never have two aims at once. Had you not been dazzled and ſeduced by the luxurious hope of partridge, you would moſt probably have ſecured your ſnipe.

FABLE XXIII.

The Beggar and his Dog.

A BEGGAR and his Dog ſat at the gate of a noble courtier, and were preparing to make a meal on a bowl of fragments from the kitchen-maid. A poor dependant of his lordſhip's, who had been ſharing the ſingular favour of a dinner at the ſteward's table, was ſtruck with the appearance, and ſtopped a little to obſerve them. The Beggar, hungry and voracious as any courtier in chriſtendom, ſeized with greedineſs the choiceſt morſels, and ſwallowed them himſelf; the reſidue was divided into portions for his children. A ſcrag was thruſt into one pocket for honeſt Jack, a cruſt into another for baſhful Tom, and a luncheon of cheeſe was wrapt up with care for the little favourite of his hopeful family. In ſhort, if any thing was thrown to the Dog, it was a bone ſo cloſely picked, that it ſcarcely afforded a pittance

to keep life and ſoul together. How exactly alike, ſaid the dependant, is this poor Dog's caſe and mine! He is watching for a dinner from a maſter who cannot ſpare it; I for a place from a needy lord, whoſe wants perhaps are greater than my own: and whoſe relations more clamorous than any of this Beggar's brats. Shrewdly was it ſaid by an ingenious writer, a Courtier's Dependant is a Beggar's Dog.

FABLE XXIV.

The Sun and the Vapour.

IN the evening of a ſummer's day, the Sun, as he deſcended behind the weſtern hills, beheld a thick and unwholeſome Vapour extending itſelf over the whole face of the vallies. Every ſhrub and every flower immediately folded up its leaves, and ſhrunk from the touch of this deteſted enemy. Well haſt thou choſen, ſaid the god of day, this

the hour of my departure, to ſpread thy peſtilential influence, and taint the beauties of the creation. Enjoy for a ſhort ſpace the notable triumphs of thy malignity. I ſhall return again with the morning, repair thy miſchiefs, and put an end to thy exiſtence. May the Slanderer in thy fate diſcern his own, and be warned to dread the return of Truth.

FABLE XXV.

Love and Folly.

IN the moſt early ſtate of things, and among the eldeſt of beings, exiſted that God, as the poets entitle him, or rather that Dæmon, as Plato calls him, whoſe name is Love. He was aſſiſting to the father of the Gods, in reducing chaos into order, in eſtabliſhing the harmony of the univerſe, and in regulating and putting in execution the laws, by which the operations of nature are performed,

and the frame of the world ſubſiſts. Univerſal good ſeemed to be his only ſtudy, and he was the ſupreme delight both of gods and men. But in proceſs of time, among other diſorders that aroſe in the univerſe, it appeared that Love began to deviate very often from what had ſeemed till now to be his chief purſuit: he would raiſe frequent diſturbances and confuſion in the courſe of nature; though it was always under the pretence of maintaining order and agreement. It ſeems he had entered into a very intimate acquaintance with a perſon who had but lately made her appearance in the world. This perſon was Folly, the daughter of pride and ignorance. They were often together, and as often as they were, ſome miſchief was ſure to be the conſequence. By degrees he introduced her into the heavens, where it was their great joy by various artifices to lead the gods into ſuch meaſures as involved them in many inconveniences, and expoſed them to much ridicule. They deluded them all in their turns, except Minerva, the only divinity that eſcaped their wiles. Even Jupiter himſelf was induced by them to take ſome ſteps not at all ſuitable to the dignity of his character. Folly had gotten the entire aſcendant over her companion; however ſhe was reſolved to make ſtill more ſure of him, and engroſs him wholly to herſelf: with this deſign ſhe infuſed a certain intoxicating juice into his nectar, the effects of which were ſo powerful, that in the end it utterly deprived him of his ſight. Love was too much prejudiced in her favour, to apprehend her to be the cauſe of his misfortune; nor indeed did he ſeem to be in the leaſt ſenſible of his condition. But his mother Venus ſoon found it out: and in the exceſs of her grief and rage carried her complaint to Jupiter, conjuring him to puniſh the ſorcereſs who had blinded her ſon.

Jupiter, willing to clear the heavens of ſuch troubleſome company, called both parties before him, and inquired into their conduct. After a full hearing, he determined, that Folly ſhould make ſome ſort of reparation for the injury done to Love: and being reſolved to puniſh both for the many irregularities which they had lately introduced, he condemned Love to wander about the earth, and ordered Folly to be his guide.

FABLE XXVI.

The Eclipſe.

ONE day when the Moon was under an Eclipſe ſhe complained thus to the Sun of the diſcontinuance of his favours. My deareſt friend, ſaid ſhe, why do you not ſhine upon me as you uſed to do? Do I not ſhine upon thee? ſaid the Sun; I am very ſure that I intend it. O no, replies the

Moon, but I now perceive the reaſon. I ſee that dirty planet, the Earth, is got between us.

The good influences of the great would perhaps be more diffuſive, were it not for their miſchievous dependants, who are ſo frequently ſuffered to interpoſe.

FABLE XXVII.

The Boy and the Butterfly.

A BOY, greatly ſmitten with the colours of a Butterfly, purſued it from flower to flower with indefatigable pains. Firſt he aimed to ſurpriſe it among the leaves of a roſe; then to cover it with his hat, as it was feeding on a daiſy; now hoped to ſecure it, as it reſted on a ſprig of myrtle; and now grew ſure of his prize, perceiving it loiter on a bed of violets. But the fickle Fly, continually changing one bloſſom for another, ſtill eluded his

attempts. At length, obſerving it half buried in the cup of a tulip, he ruſhed forward, and ſnatching it with violence, cruſhed it all to pieces. The dying inſect, ſeeing the poor Boy ſomewhat chagrined at his diſappointment, addreſſed him with all the calmneſs of a Stoic, in the following manner: ——Behold now the end of thy unprofitable ſolicitude! and learn, for the benefit of thy future life, that all pleaſure is but a painted Butterfly; which, although it may ſerve to amuſe thee in the purſuit, if embraced with too much ardour, will periſh in thy graſp.

FABLE XXVIII.

The Toad and the Ephemeron.

AS ſome workmen were digging marble in a mountain of Scythia, they diſcerned a Toad of an enormous ſize in the midſt of a ſolid rock. They were very much ſurpriſed at ſo uncommon an appearance, and the more they conſidered the

circumſtances of it, the more their wonder increaſed. It was hard to conceive by what means this creature had preſerved life and received nouriſhment in ſo narrow a priſon; and ſtill more difficult to account for his birth and exiſtence in a place ſo totally inacceſſible to all of his ſpecies. They could conclude no other, than that he was formed together with the rock in which he had been bred, and was coeval with the mountain itſelf. While the were purſuing theſe ſpeculations, the Toad ſat ſwelling and bloating, till he was ready to burſt with pride and ſelf-importance; to which at laſt, he thus gave vent:—Yes, ſays he, you behold in me a ſpecimen of the Antedeluvian race of animals. I was begotten before the flood; and who is there among the preſent upſtart race of mortals, that ſhall dare to contend with me in nobility of birth, or dignity of character? An Ephemeron, ſprung that morning from the river Hypanis, as he was flying about from place to place, chanced to be preſent, and obſerved all that paſſed with great attention and curioſity. Vain boaſter, ſays he, what foundation haſt thou for pride, either in thy deſcent, merely becauſe it is ancient, or thy life, becauſe it hath been long? What good qualities haſt thou received from thy anceſtors? Inſignificant even to thyſelf, as well as uſeleſs to others, thou art almoſt as inſenſible as the block in which thou waſt bred. Even I, that had my birth only from the ſcum of the neighbouring river, at the riſing of this day's Sun, and who ſhall die at its ſetting, have more reaſon to applaud my condition, than thou haſt to be proud of thine. I have enjoyed the warmth of the Sun, the light of the day, and the purity of the air; I have flown from ſtream to ſtream, from tree to tree, and from the plain to the mountain: I have provided for poſterity, and

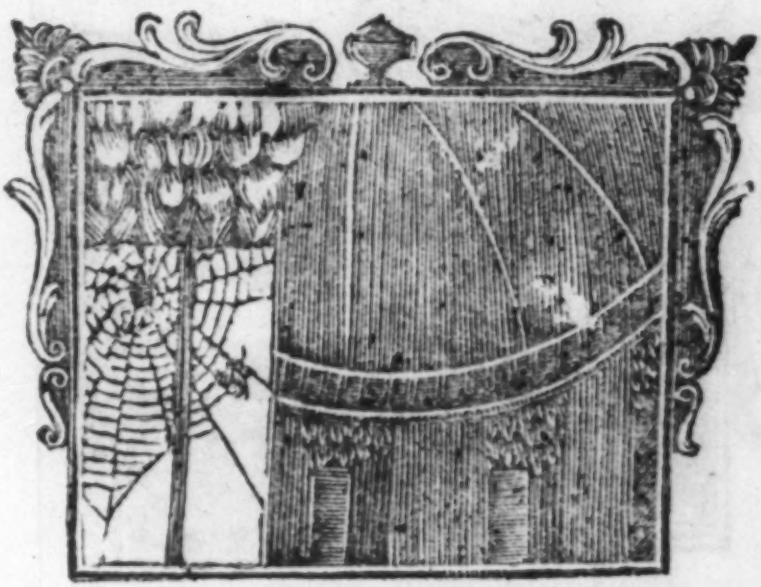
ſhall leave behind me a numerous offspring to people the next age of to-morrow: in ſhort, I have fulfilled all the ends of my being, and I have been happy. My whole life, 'tis true, is but of twelve hours: but even one hour of it is to be preferred to a thouſand years of mere exiſtence; which have been ſpent, like thine, in ſloth, ignorance, and ſtupidity.

FABLE XXIX.

The Peacock.

THE Peacock, who at firſt was diſtinguiſhed only by a creſt of feathers, preferred a petition to Juno that he might be honoured alſo with a train. As the bird was a particular favourite, Juno readily enough aſſented; and his train was ordered to ſurpaſs that of every fowl in the creation. The Minion, conſcious of his ſuperb

appearance, thought it requiſite to aſſume a proportionable dignity of gait and manners. The common poultry of the farm-yard were quite aſtoniſhed at his magnificence; and even the pheaſants themſelves beheld him with an eye of envy.—But when he attempted to fly, he perceived himſelf to have ſacrificed all his activity to oſtentation; and that he was encumbered by the pomp in which he placed his glory.

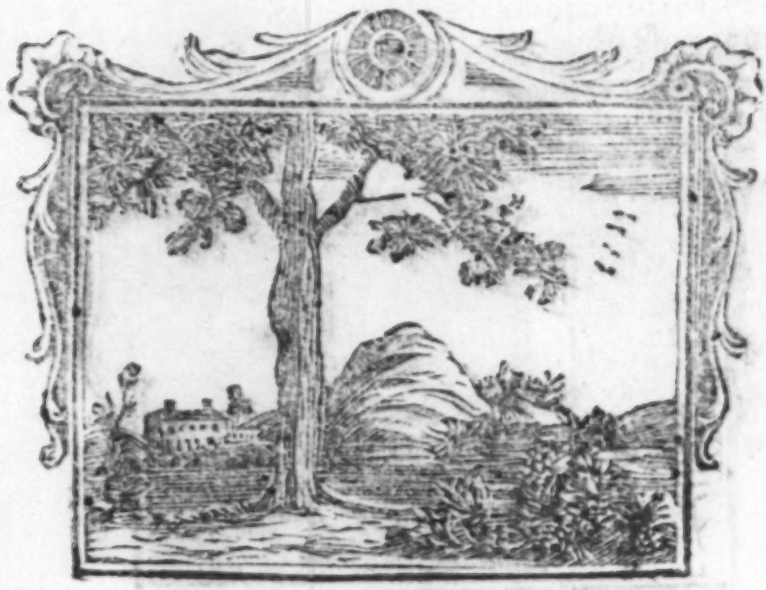


FABLE XXX.

The Fly in St. Paul's Cupola.

AS a Fly was crawling leiſurely up one of the columns of St. Paul's Cupola, ſhe often ſtopped, ſurveyed, examined, and at laſt broke forth into the following exclamation: Strange! that any one who pretended to be an artiſt, ſhould ever leave ſo ſuperb a ſtructure, with ſo many roughneſſes unpoliſhed! Ah, my friend, ſaid a

very learned architect, who hung in his web under one of the capitals, you ſhould never decide of things beyond the extent of your capacity. This lofty building was not erected for ſuch diminutive animals as you or I; but for a certain ſort of creatures, who are at leaſt ten thouſand times as large: to their eyes, it is very poſſible, theſe columns may ſeem as ſmooth, as to you appear the wings of your favourite miſtreſs.



FABLE XXXI.

The Elm-tree and the Vine.

AN extravagant young Vine, vainly ambitious of independency, and fond of rambling at large, deſpiſed the alliance of a ſtately Elm that grew near, and courted her embraces. Having riſen to ſome ſmall height without any kind of ſupport, ſhe ſhot forth her flimſy branches to a very uncommon and ſuperfluous length, calling on her neighbour to

take notice how little ſhe wanted his aſſiſtance. Poor infatuated ſhrub, replied the Elm, how inconſiſtent is thy conduct! Wouldſt thou be truly independent, thou ſhouldſt carefully apply thoſe juices to the enlargement of thy ſtem, which thou laviſheſt in vain upon unneceſſary foliage; I ſhortly ſhall behold thee groveling on the ground; yet, countenanced, indeed, by many of the human race, who, intoxicated with vanity, have deſpiſed œconomy; and who, to ſupport for a moment their empty boaſt of independance, have exhauſted the very ſource of it in frivolous expences.

FABLE XXXII.

The Lauruſtinus and the Roſe-tree.

IN the quarters of a ſhrubbery, where deciduous plants and evergreens were intermingled with an air of negligence, it happened that a Roſe grew not

far from a Lauruſtinus. The Roſe, enlivened by the breath of June, and attired in all its gorgeous bloſſoms, looked with much contempt on the Lauruſtinus, who had nothing to diſplay but the duſky verdure of its leaves. What a wretched neighbour, cried ſhe, is this! and how unworthy to partake the honour of my company! Better to bloom and die in the deſert, than to aſſociate myſelf here with ſuch low and dirty vegetables. And is this my lot at laſt, whom every nation has agreed to honour, and every poet conſpired to reverence, as the undoubted ſovereign of the field and garden? If I really am ſo, let my ſubjects at leaſt keep their diſtance, and let a circle remain vacant round me, ſuitable to the ſtate my rank requires. Here, gardener, bring thy hatchet; prithee cut down this Lauruſtinus, or at leaſt remove it to its proper ſphere. Be pacified, my lovely Roſe, replied the gardener, enjoy thy ſovereignty with moderation, and thou ſhalt receive all the homage which thy beauty can require. But remember that in winter, when neither thou nor any of thy tribe produce one flower or leaf to cheer me, this faithful ſhrub, which thou deſpiſeſt, will become the glory of my garden. Prudence, therefore, as well as gratitude, is concerned, in the protection of a friend, that will ſhew his Friendſhip in adverſity.

FABLE XXXIII.

The Senſitive-plant and the Palm-tree.

THE Senſitive-plant being brought out of the green-houſe on a fine ſummer's day, and placed in a beautiful grove adorned with the fineſt foreſt-trees, and the moſt curious plants, began to give himſelf great airs, and to treat all that were about him with much petulance and diſdain.—— Lord! ſays he, how could the gardener think of ſetting me among a parcel of trees; groſs, inanimate things, mere vegetables, and perfect ſtocks! Sure he does not take me for a common plant, when he knows, that I have the ſenſe of feeling in a more exquiſite degree than he has himſelf: it really ſhocks me to ſee into what wretched low company he has introduced me: 'tis more than the delicacy of my conſtitution, and the extreme tenderneſs of my nerves, can bear. Pray, Mrs. Acacia, ſtand a little farther off, and don't preſume quite ſo much upon

your idle pretence of being my couſin. Good Mr. Citron, keep your diſtance, I beſeech you; your ſtrong ſcent quite overpowers me. Friend Palm-tree, your offenſive ſhade is really more than I am able to ſupport. The lofty Palm-tree, as he was ſhooting up his head with the more vigour under the weight that was hung upon it, condeſcended to rebuke the impertinent creature in the following manner: Thou vegetable fribble! learn to know thyſelf, and thy own worthleſſneſs and inſignificance. Thou valueſt thyſelf on a vicious ſoftneſs, a falſe delicacy, the very defect and imbecility of thy nature. What art thou good for, that ſhrinkeſt at a touch, and droopeſt at a breath of air; feeble and barren, a perpetual torment to thyſelf, and wholly uſeleſs to others? Whereas we, whom thou treateſt with ſuch diſdain, make a grateful return to man for his care of us: ſome of us yield him fruit, others are ſerviceable to him by their ſtrength and firmneſs; we ſhade him from the heat of the ſun, and we defend him from the violence of the winds; I am particularly diſtinguiſhed by my hardineſs and perſeverance, my ſteadineſs and conſtancy: and on account of thoſe very qualities which thou wanteſt, and affecteſt to deſpiſe, have the honour to be made the emblem of conqueſt, and the reward of the conqueror.

FABLE XXXIV.

The Tentyrites and the Ichneumon.

A CROCODILE of prodigious ſize, and uncommon fierceneſs, infeſted the banks of the Nile, and ſpread deſolation through all the neighbouring country. He ſeized the ſhepherd, together with the ſheep, and devoured the herdſman as well as the cattle. Emboldened by ſucceſs, and the terror which prevailed wherever he appeared, he ventured to carry his incurſions even into the iſland of Tentyra, and to brave the people, who boaſt themſelves the only tamers of his race. The Tentyrites themſelves were ſtruck with horror at the appearance of a monſter ſo much more terrible than any they had ever ſeen before: even the boldeſt of them dared not to attack him openly; and the moſt experienced long endeavoured with all their art and addreſs to ſurpriſe him, but in vain. As they were conſulting together, what they ſhould do in theſe circumſtances,

an Ichneumon ſtepped forth, and thus addreſſed them:—I perceive your diſtreſs, neighbours; and though I cannot aſſiſt you in the preſent difficulty, yet give me leave to offer you ſome advice that may be of uſe to you for the future. A little prudence is worth all your courage: it may be glorious to overcome a great evil, but the wiſeſt way is to prevent it. You deſpiſe the crocodile while he is ſmall and weak; and do not ſufficiently conſider, that as he is a long lived animal, ſo 'tis his peculiar property to grow as long as he lives. You ſee I am a poor, little, feeble creature; yet am I much more terrible to the crocodile, and more uſeful to the country, than you are. I attack him in the egg; and while you are contriving for months together, how to get the better of one crocodile, and all to no purpoſe, I effectually deſtroy fifty of them in a day.

FABLE XXXV.

The Tulip and the Roſe.

A TULIP and a Roſe happened to be near neighbours in the ſame garden. They were both indeed extremely beautiful; yet the Roſe engaged conſiderably more than an equal ſhare of the gardener's attention. Enamoured, as in truth he was, of the delicious odour it diffuſed, he appeared, in the eye of the Tulip, to be always kiſſing and careſſing it. The envy and jealouſy of rival beauties are not eaſily to be concealed. The Tulip, vain of its external charms, and unable to bear the thought of being forſaken for another, remonſtrated in theſe words againſt the gardener's partiality: Why are my beauties thus neglected? Are not my colours more bright, more various, and more inviting, than any which that red-faced thing has to diſplay? Why then is ſhe to engroſs your whole affection, and thus for ever to be preferred.—Be not diſſatisfied, my

fair Tulip, ſaid the gardener; I acknowledge thy beauties, and admire them as they deſerve. But there are found in my favourite Roſe ſuch attractive odours, ſuch internal charms, that I enjoy a banquet in their fragrance, which no mere beauty can pretend to furniſh.

FABLE XXXVI.

The Woodcock and the Mallard.

A WOODCOCK and a Mallard were feeding together in ſome marſhy ground at the tail of a mill-pond. Lard, ſays the ſqueamiſh Woodcock, in what a voracious and beaſtly manner do you devour all that comes before you! Neither ſnail, frog, toad, nor any kind of filth, can eſcape the fury of your enormous appetite. All alike goes down, without meaſure, and without diſtinction—What an odious vice is gluttony.

Good-lack! replied the Mallard, pray how came you to be my accuſer? And whence has your exceſſive delicacy a right to cenſure my plain eating? Is it a crime to ſatisfy one's hunger? Or is it not indeed a virtue rather, to be pleaſed with the food which nature offers us? Surely I would ſooner be charged with gluttony, than with that finical and fickly appetite, on which you are pleaſed to ground your ſuperiority of taſte——What a ſilly vice is Daintineſs!

Thus endeavouring to palliate their reſpective paſſions, our epicures parted with a mutual contempt. The Mallard haſting to devour ſome garbage, which was in reality a bait, immediately gorged a hook through mere greedineſs, and overſight: while the Woodcock, flying through a glade, in order to ſeek his favourite juices, was entangled in a net, ſpread acroſs it for that purpoſe; falling each of them a ſacrifice to their different, but equal, foibles.

FABLE XXXVII.

The two Trouts and the Gudgeon.

A FISHERMAN, in the month of May, ſtood angling on the banks of the Thames with an artificial fly: He threw his bait with ſo much art, that a young Trout was ruſhing towards it, when ſhe was prevented by her mother. Never, ſaid ſhe, my child, be too precipitate, where there is a poſſibility of danger. Take due time to conſider, before you riſk an action that may be fatal. How know you whether yon appearance be indeed a fly, or the ſnare of an enemy? Let ſome one elſe make the experiment before you. If it be a fly, he very probably will elude the firſt attack: and the ſecond may be made, if not with ſucceſs, at leaſt with ſafety.—She had no ſooner uttered this caution, than a Gudgeon ſeized upon the pretended fly, and became an example to the giddy daughter, of the great importance of her mother s counſel.

FABLE XXXVIII.

The Stars and the Sky-rocket.

AS a Rocket, on a rejoicing night, aſcended through the air, and obſerved the ſtream of light that diſtinguiſhed its paſſage, he could not forbear exulting in his elevation, and calling upon the Stars to do him reverence. Behold, ſaid he, what gazing multitudes admire the luſtre of my train, whilſt all your feeble ſparks of light paſs unobſerved, or diſregarded! The Stars heard his empty boaſt with a ſilent indignation: the Dog-Star only vouchſafed to anſwer him. How weak are they, ſaid he, who value themſelves on the voice of popular applauſe! 'Tis true, the novelty of thy appearance may procure to thee more admiration from vulgar minds than our daily ſplendors can attract, although indeed a laſting miracle. But do not eſtimate thy importance by the capricious fancy of ill-judging mortals. Know

thyſelf to be but the gaudy pageant of a few moments, the tranſient gaze of a giddy and ignorant multitude. Even while I ſpeak, thy blaze is half extinguiſhed, and thou art at this inſtant ſinking into perpetual oblivion. Whereas our fires were lighted up by Heaven for the admiration and advantage of the univerſe; and our glory ſhall endure for ever.

FABLE XXXIX.

The Farmer and his three Enemies.

A WOLF, a Fox, and a Hare, happened one evening to be foraging in different parts of a Farmer's yard. Their firſt effort was pretty ſucceſsful, and they returned in ſafety to their ſeveral quarters: however, not ſo happy as to be unperceived by the Farmer's watchful eye: who placing ſeveral kinds of ſnares, made each his priſoner in the next attempt. He firſt took the Hare to taſk, who

confeſſed ſhe had eaten a few turnip tops, merely to ſatisfy her hunger: beſought him piteouſly to ſpare her life, and promiſed never to enter his grounds again. He then accoſted the Fox, who in a fawning obſequious tone, proteſted that he came into his premiſes through no other motive than pure goodwill, to reſtrain the Hares, and other vermin, from the plunder of his corn; and that, whatever evil tongues might ſay he had too great a regard both for him and for juſtice to be in the leaſt capable of any diſhoneſt action. He laſt of all examined the Wolf what buſineſs brought him within the purlieus of a Farmer's yard? The Wolf very impudently declared, it was with a view of deſtroying his lambs, to which he had an undoubted right: that the Farmer himſelf was the only felon, who robbed the community of Wolves of what was meant to be their proper food. That this, at leaſt, was his opinion; and whatever fate attended him, he ſhould not ſcruple to riſque his life in the purſuit of his lawful prey.

The Farmer having heard their pleas, determined the cauſe in the following manner: The Hare, ſaid he, deſerves compaſſion, for the penitence ſhe ſhews, and the humble confeſſion ſhe has made:—As for the Fox and Wolf, let them be hanged together; criminals alike with reſpect to the fact, they have alike heightened their equal guilt by the aggravations of hypocriſy and of impudence.

FABLE XL.

The Snail and the Statue.

A STATUE of the Medicean Venus was erected in a grove ſacred to beauty and the fine arts. Its modeſt attitude, its elegant proportions, aſſiſted by the ſituation in which it was placed, attracted the regard of every delicate obſerver.—A Snail, who had fixed himſelf beneath the moulding of a pedeſtal, beheld with an evil eye the admiration it excited. Accordingly, watching his opportunity, he ſtrove, by trailing his filthy ſlime over every limb and feature, to obliterate thoſe beauties which he could not endure to hear ſo much applauded. An honeſt linnet, however, who obſerved him at his dirty work, took the freedom to aſſure him, that he would infallibly loſe his labour; for, although, ſaid he, to an injudicious eye, thou mayeſt ſully the perfections of this finiſhed piece, yet a more accurate and cloſe inſpector will diſcover its beauty, through all the blemiſhes with which thou haſt endeavoured to diſguiſe it.

FABLE XLI.

The Waterfall.

FROM the head of a narrow valley that is wholly overſhaded by the growth of trees, a large Caſcade burſts forth with a luxuriance unexpected. Firſt the current ruſhed down a precipice with headlong impetuoſity; then daſhed from rock to rock, and divided as it rolls along by fragments of ſtone or trunks of trees, it aſſumes a milk-white appearance, and ſparkles through the gloom. All is intricacy; all is profuſion: and the tide, however ample, appears yet more conſiderable by the fantaſtic growth of roots that hide the limits of its channel. Thus bounding down from one deſcent to another, it no ſooner gains the level than it ſinks beneath the earth, and buries all its glory at our feet.

A ſpectator, privy to the ſcanty ſource which furniſhed out this grand appearance, ſtood one day in

a muſing poſture, and began to moralize on its prodigality. Ah! ſilly ſtream, ſaid he, why wilt thou haſten to exhauſt thy ſource, and thus wilfully incur the contempt that waits on poverty? Art thou ignorant that thy funds are by no means equal to this expence? Fear not, my kind adviſer, replied the generous Caſcade; the gratitude I owe my maſter, who collected my rills into a ſtream, induces me to entertain his friends in the beſt manner I am able; when alone, I act with more economy.

FABLE XLII.

The Oak and the Sycamore.

A SYCAMORE grew beſide an Oak; and being not a little elevated by the firſt warm days in ſpring, began to ſhoot forth his leaves apace, and to deſpiſe the naked Oak for inſenſibility and want of ſpirit. The Oak, conſcious of his ſuperior nature,

made this philoſophical reply: Be not, my friend, ſo much delighted with the firſt precarious addreſs of every fickle zephyr: conſider, the froſts may yet return: and if thou coveteſt an equal ſhare with me in all the glories of the riſing year, do not afford them an opportunity to nip thy beauties in their bud. As for myſelf, I only wait to ſee this genial warmth a little confirmed: and, whenever that is the caſe, I ſhall perhaps diſplay a majeſty that will not eaſily be ſhaken. But the tree which appears too forward to exult in the firſt favourable glance of ſpring, will ever be the readieſt to droop beneath the frowns of winter.

FABLE XLIII.

The Wolf and the Shepherd's Dog.

A WOLF ranging over the foreſt, came within the borders of a ſheep-walk; when meeting with a Shepherd's Dog, that with a ſurly ſort of a

growl, demanded his buſineſs there, he thought proper to put on as innocent an appearance as he could, and proteſted upon his honour that he meant not the leaſt offence. I am afraid, ſaid the Dog, the pledge of your honour is but a poor depoſit for your honeſty: you muſt not take it amiſs, if I object to the ſecurity No ſlur upon my reputation, replied the Wolf, I beg of you. My ſenſe of honour is as delicate, as my great achievements are renowned. I would not leave a ſtain upon my memory for the world. The fame of what are commonly called great achievements is very precious, to be ſure, returned the Dog; almoſt equal to the character of an excellent butcher, a gallant highwayman, or an expert aſſaſſin. While the Dog was yet ſpeaking, a lamb happened to ſtray within reach of our hero. The temptation was ſtronger than he was able to reſiſt: he ſprung upon his prey, and was ſcouring haſtily away with it. However, the Dog ſeized and held him, till the arrival of the ſhepherd, who took meaſures for his execution Juſt as he was going to diſpatch him, I obſerve, ſays the Dog, that one of your noble achievements is the deſtruction of the innocent. You are welcome to the renown, as you are alſo to the reward of it. As for me, I ſhall prefer the credit of having honeſtly defended my maſter's property, to any fame you have acquired by thus heroically invading it.

FABLE XLIV.

The Muſhroom and the Acorn.

AN Acorn fell from the top of an old venerable oak, full on the head of a Muſhroom that unhappily ſprung up beneath it. Wounded by the blow, the Muſhroom complained of the incivility. Impertinent upſtart, replied the Acorn, why didſt thou, with familiar boldneſs, approach ſo near to thy ſuperiors? Shall the wretched offspring of a dunghill preſume to raiſe its head on a ſpot ennobled by my anceſtors for ſo many generations? I do not mean, returned the Muſhroom, to diſpute the honour of thy birth, or to put my own in competition with it; on the contrary, I muſt acknowledge that I hardly know from whence I ſprung. But ſure, 'tis merit, and not mere anceſtry, that obtains the regard of thoſe whoſe approbation is truly valuable: I have little perhaps to boaſt; but ſurely thou, who haſt thus inſulted me, canſt have no pretence

to boaſt any. I pleaſe the palates of mankind, and give a poignant flavour to their moſt elegant entertainments; while thou, with all the pride of thy anceſtry, art fit only to fatten hogs.

FABLE XLV.

Wiſdom and Cunning.

AS Wiſdom, in the form of a beautiful young lady, was travelling along the road, it happened that ſhe was benighted, and loſt her way. She had not however wandered far, when perceiving a light glimmer from a window at ſome diſtance, ſhe endeavoured to direct her ſteps towards the houſe where it appeared. This proved to be no other than the miſerable abode of ſelfiſhneſs; who beneath the ſemblance of a churliſh and cloſe-fiſted peaſant, had long taken up his reſidence in this loneſome habitation. She knocked at the door to in-

quire her way. The Lout opened it with caution; but being immediately ſtruck with the uncommon luſtre of ſo fine a figure, he found his appetite awake, and became impatient for the gratification of it. Wiſdom, on the other hand, feeling an utter deteſtation of him, would have willingly withdrawn herſelf; but alas! it was too late. He took advantage of her diſtreſs, ſeized, and forced her to his bed. Nine months afterwards ſhe was delivered of a ſquint-eyed, ſallow-faced imp, unto whom ſhe could never be induced to ſhew any marks of natural affection. She would not even own him for her proper offspring; and he was put into the hands of Dullneſs, to be nurſed and educated at her diſcretion. As he arrived to years of maturity, he was known by the name of Cunning. Some faint reſemblance which he bore of his mother, procured him a degree of reſpect among perſons of ſmall diſcernment; and he ſhowed ſomewhat of her addreſs in regard to the means by which he gained his ends; but he had ſo much of the Father, as never to extend his aims to any truly noble or ſocial achievement.

FABLE XLVI.

The Toad and the Gold-fiſh.

AS a Gold-fiſh, newly brought from the warm regions of the eaſt, diſplayed his beauties in the ſun; a Toad, who had long eyed him with no ſmall degree of envy, broke out into this exclamation: How partial and how fantaſtic is the favour of mankind! regardleſs of every excellence that is obvious and familiar; and only ſtruck with what is imported from a diſtant climate at a large expence! What a pompous baſon is here conſtructed, and what extreme fondneſs is here ſhown for this inſignificant ſtranger? While a quadrupede of my importance is neglected, ſhunned, and even perſecuted. Surely, were I to appear in China, I ſhould receive the ſame, or perhaps greater, honours than are laviſhed here upon this tinſel favourite.

The Gold-fiſh, conſcious of his real beauty, and ſomewhat angry to be thus inſulted by ſo very un-

ſightly and deformed a creature, made this rational reply. It muſt be confeſſed, that the opinions of men are ſometimes guided by the caprice you mention. Yet as for me and the reſt of my tribe, it is well known that if we are admired in England, we are not leſs admired at home: being there eſteemed by the greateſt mandarins, fed by ſtated officers, and lodged in baſons as ſuperb as any your nation has to boaſt. Perhaps then, notwithſtanding your ſage remark, there are ſome virtues and ſome qualities that pleaſe and diſguſt almoſt univerſally; and as innocence, joined to beauty, ſeldom fails to procure eſteem, ſo malice, added to deformity, will cauſe a general deteſtation.

FABLE XLVII.

The Hermit.

A CERTAIN Hermit had ſcooped his cave near the ſummit of a lofty mountain, from whence he had an opportunity of ſurveying a large extent both of ſea and land. He ſat one evening, contemplating with pleaſure on the various objects that lay diffuſed before him. The woods were dreſſed in the brighteſt verdure; the thickets adorned with the gayeſt bloſſoms. The birds caroled beneath the branches; the lambs frolicked around the meads; the peaſant whiſtled beſide his team; and the ſhips, driven by gentle gales, were returning ſafely into their proper harbours. In ſhort, the arrival of ſpring had doubly enlivened the whole ſcene before his eye; and every object yielded a diſplay either of beauty or of happineſs.

On a ſudden aroſe a violent ſtorm. The winds muſtered all their fury, and whole forests of oak lay ſcattered on the ground. Darkneſs inſtantly ſucceeded; hail-ſtones and rain were poured forth in cataracts, and lightning and thunder added horror to the gloom.

And now the ſea, piled up in mountains, bore aloft the largeſt veſſels, while the horrid uproar of its waves drowned the ſhrieks of the wretched mariners. When the whole tempeſt had exhauſted its fury, it was inſtantly followed by the ſhock of an earthquake.

The poor inhabitants of a neighbouring village flocked in crowds to our Hermit's cave; religiouſly hoping, that his well known ſanctity would protect them in their diſtreſs. They were, however, not a little ſurpriſed at the profound tranquillity that appeared in his countenance. My friends, ſaid he, be not diſmayed. Terrible to me as well as to you, would have been the war of elements we have juſt beheld; but that I have meditated with ſo much attention on the various works of Providence, as to be perſuaded that his goodneſs is equal to his power.

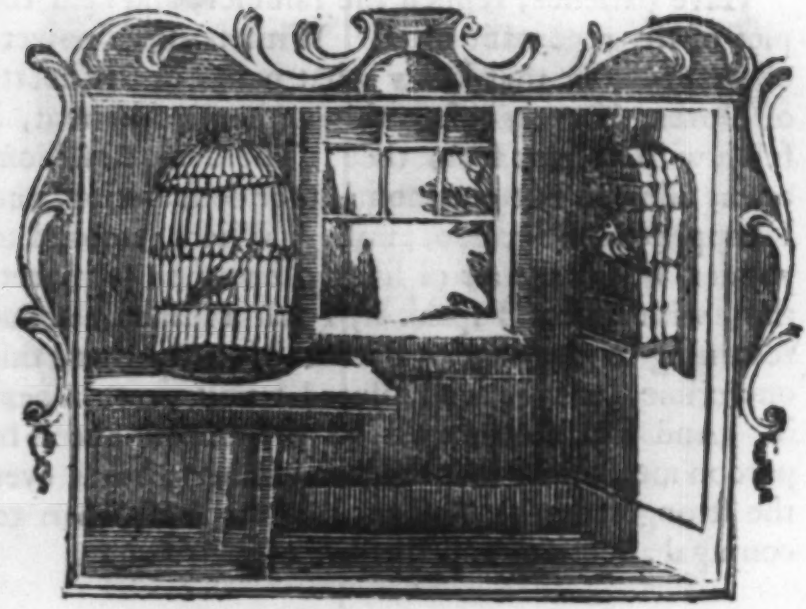
FABLE XLVIII.

The Dove.

A DOVE that had a mate and young ones, happening to ſpy her cage door open, was driven by a ſudden impulſe to fly out into an adjacent grove. There, perched upon the bough of a ſycamore, ſhe ſat as it were wrapt in deep contemplation; not recovering from her reverie, until the owner drew nigh unſeen, and brought her back to her little family.

Art thou not aſhamed then, ſays her mate, thus to deſert thy helpleſs offſpring? Art thou not baſe to abandon me, for the company of birds to whom thou art a ſtranger? Could I have harboured ſuch a thought? I, who have been ever conſtant to our firſt engagement, and muſt have died of mere deſpair, hadſt thou not returned to my embraces? But how, alas! returned! Not, as it ſeems, by choice; but enſnared by dint of artifice, and brought hither by conſtraint.

Have patience, replied the rambler, and hear the plea of thy repentant mate. Witneſs all ye powers of wedlock, ye that know what paſſes in the hearts of Doves, if ever, before this unhappy moment, I felt a wiſh to part from thee! The door, ſo ſeldom open, allowed but one moment for deliberation, and I happened to decide amiſs. When removed to yonder wood, the air of liberty breathed ſo ſweet, that, with horror I ſpeak it, I felt a ſuſpenſe about returning to the cage. Pardon, I pray thee, this one crime, and be well aſſured I will never repeat it. And that thou may'ſt be the more induced to pardon me, know, that the love of liberty burns ever the ſtrongeſt in the boſoms that are moſt open to conjugal affection, and the love of their young.



FABLE XLIX.

The Nightingale and the Bullfinch.

A NIGHTINGALE and a Bullfinch occupied two cages in the ſame apartment. The Nightingale perpetually varied her ſong, and every effort ſhe made afforded freſh entertainment. The Bullfinch always whiſtled the ſame dull tune that he had learnt, till all the family grew weary of the diſguſtful repetition. What is the reaſon, ſaid the Bullfinch one day to his neighbour, that your ſongs are always heard with peculiar attention, while mine, I obſerve, are almoſt as wholly diſregarded? The reaſon, replied the Nightingale, is obvious; your audience are ſufficiently acquainted with every note you have been taught, and they know your natural abilities too well to expect any thing new from that quarter. How then can you ſuppoſe they will liſten to a ſongſter, from whom nothing native or original is to be expected?

FABLE L.

The Fighting Cocks and the Turkey.

TWO Cocks of the genuine game breed met by chance upon the confines of their reſpective walks. To ſuch great and heroic ſouls the ſmalleſt matter imaginable affords occaſion for diſpute. They approach each other with pride and indignation; they look defiance; they crow a challenge; and immediately commences a long and bloody battle. It was fought on both ſides with ſo much courage and dexterity; they gave and received ſuch deep and deſperate wounds; that they both lay down upon the turf utterly ſpent, blinded, and diſabled. While this was their ſituation, a Turkey, that had been a ſpectator of all that paſſed between

them, drew near to the field of battle, and reproved them in this manner: How fooliſh and abſurd has been your quarrel, my good neighbours! A more ridiculous one could ſcarce have happened among the moſt contentious of all creatures, Men. Becauſe you have crowed perhaps in each other's hearing, or one of you has picked up a grain of corn upon the territories of his rival, you have both rendered yourſelves miſerable for the remainder of your days.

FABLE LI.

The Kingfiſher and the Sparrow.

AS a Kingfiſher was ſitting beneath the ſhade, upon the banks of a river, ſhe was ſurpriſed on a ſudden by the fluttering of a Sparrow that had eloped from the neighbouring town, to viſit her. When the firſt compliments were over, How is it poſſible, ſaid the Sparrow, that a bird ſo finely adorned can think of ſpending all her days in the very depth of retirement! The golden plumage of your breaſt, the ſhining azure of your pinions, were never given you to be concealed, but to attract the wonder of beholders. Why then ſhould you not endeavour to know the world, and be at the ſame time, yourſelf, both known and admired? You are very complaiſant, at leaſt, replied the Kingfiſher, to conclude that my being admired, would be the conſequence of my being known. But it has ſometimes been my lot, in the loneſome valleys that I

frequent, to hear the complaints of beauty that has been neglected; and of worth that has been deſpiſed. Poſſibly it does not always happen, that even ſuperior excellence is found to excite admiration, or to obtain encouragement. I have learned beſides, not to build my happineſs upon the opinion of others, ſo much as upon ſelf-conviction, and the approbation of my own heart. Remember, I am a Kingfiſher; theſe woods and ſtreams are my delight; and ſo long as they are free from winds and tempeſts, believe me, I am perfectly content with my ſituation. Why therefore ſhould I court the noiſe and buſtle of the world, which I find ſo little agreeable to my native diſpoſition? It may be the joy of a Sparrow to indulge his curioſity, and to diſplay his eloquence. I, for my part, love ſilence, privacy, and contemplation; and think that every one ſhould conſult the native bias of his temper, before he chooſes the way of life in which he expects to meet with happineſs.

FABLE LII.

The Bee and the Spider.

ON the leaves and flowers of the ſame ſhrub a Spider and a Bee purſued their ſeveral occupations: the one covering her thighs with honey; the other diſtending his bag with poiſon. The Spider, as he glanced his eye obliquely at the Bee, was ruminating with ſpleen on the ſuperiority of her productions. And how happens it, ſaid he, in a peeviſh tone, that I am able to collect nothing but poiſon from the ſelf-ſame plant that ſupplies thee with honey? My pains and induſtry are not leſs than thine; in thoſe reſpects we are each indefati-

gable. It proceeds only, replied the Bee, from the different diſpoſition of our nature; mine gives a pleaſing flavour to every thing I touch, whereas thine converts to poiſon, what by a different proceſs had been the pureſt honey.

THE END.

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